

# Platform

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The World Anti-imperialist Platform

A stylized illustration of a woman with dark hair, wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt, holding a large, dark red flag aloft with her right arm. The background is a solid red color. The entire image is framed by a thin white border.



# Contents

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<b>Work</b>	<b>Socialism and War</b> ······2 Vladimir Ilyich Lenin [with G. Y. Zinoviev]
<b>Article</b>	<b>Glory to the heroes of Stalingrad!</b> ······22 Harpal Brar   Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)
	<b>Faced with the Euro-Atlantic warmongers of a potentially exterminating third world war: Build a new Communist International, relaunch the Global Anti-Imperialist Front and give impetus to the struggles of the international working class!</b> ·31 Fadi Kassem   Pole of Communist Revival in France (PRCF); Georges Gastaud   Initiative Communiste (IC), France; Boris Differ   Pole of Communist Revival in France (PRCF)
	<b>The political stance of the Communist Party of Greece ... a communist stance?</b> ······33 Chilean Communist Party (Proletarian Action)
	<b>10 commandments of the most volatile opportunism and revisionism</b> ······43 Patelis Dimitrios   Collective of Struggle for the Revolutionary Unification of Humanity, Greece

# Socialism and War

The Attitude of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party Towards the War<sup>1)</sup>

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin [with G. Y. Zinoviev]<sup>2)</sup>

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## Contents

PREFACE TO THE FIRST (Foreign) EDITION
PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION
Chapter I. The Principles of Socialism and the War of 1914–1915
Chapter II. Classes and Parties in Russia
Chapter III. The Restoration of the International
Chapter IV. The History of the Split and the Present State of Social-Democracy in Russia

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST (Foreign) EDITION

The war has been going on for a year already. Our Party defined its attitude towards it at its very beginning, in the Central Committee's manifesto that was drawn up

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1) Lenin decided to write the pamphlet *Socialism and War* (The Attitude of the R.S.D.L.P. Towards the War) in connection with the preparations for the First International Socialist Conference. G. Y. Zinoviev helped write the pamphlet, though most of it was drawn up by Lenin, who, moreover, edited the entire text.

The pamphlet was published in German in September 1915 and distributed among the delegates to the Zimmerwald Socialist Conference. In 1916 it was published in French.

2) [Note: All early editions of *Socialism and War* in several languages, including those published while Lenin was still alive, clearly acknowledged Zinoviev as co-author of the document. The Soviet English language edition of the Lenin Collected Works acknowledges Zinoviev's involvement, but, without explanation, omits him as co-author.—Ed.].

in September 1914 and printed (after it had been sent to the members of the C.C., and to our Party's responsible representatives in Russia, and after their consent had been received) on November 1, 1914, in No.33 of our Party's Central Organ, *Sotsial-Demokrat*.<sup>3)</sup> Later, in No. 40 (March 29, 1915), were printed the resolutions of the Berne Conference<sup>4)</sup> in which our principles and tactics were more precisely enunciated.

At the present time, in Russia, there is an obvious growth of revolutionary temper among the masses. In other countries, symptoms of the same phenomenon are observed everywhere, in spite of the suppression of the revolutionary strivings of the proletariat by the majority of the official Social-Democratic parties, which have taken the side of their governments and their bourgeoisie. This state of things makes particularly urgent the publication of a pamphlet that sums up Social-Democratic tactics in relation to the war. Reprinting in full the above-mentioned Party documents, we provide them with brief explanations, endeavouring to take into account all the chief arguments in favour of bourgeois and of proletarian tactics that have been expressed in literature and at Party meetings.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Printed in the 1918 edition of the pamphlet.

This pamphlet was written in the summer of 1915, just

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3) See V.I. Lenin, *The War and Russian Social-Democracy*, Selected Works, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow 1952, Vol.I, Part 2, pp.397-406.

*Sotsial-Demokrat* – central organ of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, published as an underground newspaper from February 1908 to January 1917. Altogether 58 issues appeared—the first in Russia, the rest abroad: at Paris and, later, at Geneva. The *Sotsial-Demokrat* published more than 80 articles and other items by Lenin, who became its editor in December 1911.—Ed.

4) See V.I. Lenin, *Conference of the Sections of the R.S.D.L.P. Abroad*, Selected Works, Eng. ed., Lawrence and Wishart, London 1944, Vol. V, pp. 131–37.

The Berne Conference—a conference of the sections of the R.S.D.L.P. abroad held in Berne, Switzerland, from February 27 to March 4, 1915. Called on Lenin's initiative, it had the standing of a Bolshevik general Party conference, since it was impossible to convene an all-Russian conference during the war. Representatives were present at the conference from the Bolshevik sections in Paris, Zurich, Geneva, Seine, Lausanne, and from the "Baugy" group. Lenin represented the Central Committee and the central organ (*Sotsial-Demokrat*), directed the proceedings of the conference, and made a report on the main item on the agenda, *The War and the Tasks of the Party*. The conference adopted resolutions on the war that were drafted by Lenin.—Ed.

before the Zimmerwald Conference.<sup>5)</sup> It also appeared in German and French, and was reprinted in full in Norwegian in the organ of the Norwegian Social-Democratic youth league. The German edition of the pamphlet was secretly smuggled into Germany – into Berlin, Leipzig, Bremen and other cities, where it was secretly distributed by supporters of the Zimmerwald Left and by the Karl Liebknecht group. The French edition was secretly printed in Paris and distributed there by the French Zimmerwaldists. The Russian edition reached Russia in a very limited quantity, and in Moscow was copied out by hand by workers.

We are now reprinting this pamphlet in full as a document. The reader must remember all the time that the pamphlet was written in August 1915. This must be remembered particularly in connection with those passages which refer to Russia: Russia at that time was still tsarist, Romanov Russia.

## **Chapter I. The Principles of Socialism and the War of 1914–1915**

### **The Attitude of Socialists Towards Wars**

Socialists have always condemned war between nations as barbarous and brutal. But our attitude towards war is fundamentally different from that of the bourgeois pacifists (supporters and advocates of peace) and of the Anarchists. We differ from the former in that we understand the inevitable connection between wars and the class struggle within the country; we understand that war cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and Socialism is created; and we also differ in that we fully regard civil wars, i.e., wars waged by the oppressed

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5) Zimmerwald Conference – the first conference of internationalist socialists, held in Zimmerwald, Switzerland, on September 5-8, 1915. A struggle flared up at the conference between the Kautskyite majority and the revolutionary internationalists headed by Lenin. At the conference, Lenin organised the internationalists into the Zimmerwald Left group.

The conference adopted a manifesto which exposed the imperialist nature of the world war, denounced the “Socialists” for voting for war credits and for participating in the bourgeois governments and called on the workers of the European countries to wage struggles against the war and to strive for the conclusion of peace without annexation or payment of indemnities.

The conference also adopted a resolution expressing sympathy for war victims and elected the International Socialist Committee (I.S.C.). For an appraisal of the conference, see Lenin’s articles *The First Step* and *Revolutionary Marxists* at the International Socialist Conference, September 5-8, 1915 (V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Eng. ed., International Publishers, New York 1930, Vol.XVIII, pp.40-45, 346-49).

class against the oppressing class, slaves against slave-owners, serfs against land-owners, and wage-workers against the bourgeoisie, as legitimate, progressive and necessary. We Marxists differ from both the pacifists and the Anarchists in that we deem it necessary historically (from the standpoint of Marx’s dialectical materialism) to study each war separately. In history there have been numerous wars which, in spite of all the horrors, atrocities, distress and suffering that inevitably accompany all wars, were progressive, i.e., benefited the development of mankind by helping to destroy the exceptionally harmful and reactionary institutions (for example, autocracy or serfdom), the most barbarous despotisms in Europe (Turkish and Russian). Therefore, it is necessary to examine the historically specific features of precisely the present war.

### **Historical Types of Wars in Modern Times**

The Great French Revolution ushered in a new epoch in the history of mankind. From that time to the Paris Commune, from 1789 to 1871, one of the types of wars were wars of a bourgeois-progressive, national-liberating character. In other words, the chief content and historical significance of these wars were the overthrow of absolutism and feudalism, the undermining of these institutions, the overthrow of alien oppression. Therefore, those were progressive wars, and during such wars, all honest, revolutionary democrats, and also all Socialists, always sympathised with the success of that country (i.e., with that bourgeoisie), which had helped to overthrow, or sap, the most dangerous foundation of feudalism, absolutism and the oppression of other nations. For example, the revolutionary wars waged by France contained an element of plunder and conquest of alien territory by the French, but this does not in the least alter the fundamental historical significance of these wars, which destroyed and shattered feudalism and absolutism in the whole of old, serf-ridden Europe. In the Franco-Prussian War, Germany plundered France, but this does not alter the fundamental historical significance of this war, which liberated tens of millions of German people from feudal disintegration and from the oppression of two despots, the Russian tsar and Napoleon III.

### **The Difference Between Aggressive and Defensive War**

The epoch of 1789-1871 left deep marks and revolutionary memories. Before feudalism, absolutism and alien oppression were overthrown, the development of the proletarian struggle for Socialism was out of the question. When speaking of the legitimacy of “defensive” war in relation to the wars of such an epoch, Socialists always had in mind precisely these objects, which amounted to revolution against medievalism and serfdom. By “defensive” war Socialists always meant a “just” war in this sense (W. Liebknecht once expressed himself precisely in this way). Only in this sense have Socialists regarded, and now regard, wars “for the defence of the fatherland,” or “defensive” wars, as legitimate, progressive and just. For example, if tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, India on England, Persia or China on Russia, and so forth, those would be “just,” “defensive” wars, irrespective of who attacked first; and every Socialist would sympathise with the victory of the oppressed, dependent, unequal states against the oppressing, slave owning, predatory “great” powers.

But picture to yourselves a slave-owner who owned 100 slaves warring against a slave-owner who owned 200 slaves for a more “just” distribution of slaves. Clearly, the application of the term “defensive” war, or war “for the defence of the fatherland” in such a case would be historically false, and in practice would be sheer deception of the common people, of philistines, of ignorant people, by the astute slaveowners. Precisely in this way are the present-day imperialist bourgeoisie deceiving the peoples by means of “national ideology and the term” defence of the fatherland in the present war between slave-owners for fortifying and strengthening slavery.

### The Present War is An Imperialist War

Nearly everybody admits that the present war is an imperialist war, but in most cases this term is distorted or applied to one side, or a loophole is left for the assertion that this war may, after all, have a bourgeois-progressive, national-liberating significance. Imperialism is the highest stage in the development of capitalism, reached only in the twentieth century. Capitalism now finds the old national states, without the formation

of which it could not have overthrown feudalism, too tight for it. Capitalism has developed concentration to such a degree that whole branches of industry have been seized by syndicates, trusts and associations of capitalist billionaires, and almost the entire globe has been divided up among the “lords of capital, either in the form of colonies, or by enmeshing other countries in thousands of threads of financial exploitation. Free trade and competition have been superseded by the striving for monopoly, for the seizure of territory for the investment of capital, for the export of raw materials from them, and so forth. From the liberator of nations that capitalism was in the struggle against feudalism, imperialist capitalism has become the greatest oppressor of nations. Formerly progressive, capitalism has become reactionary; it has developed the forces of production to such a degree that mankind is faced with the alternative of going over to Socialism or of suffering years and even decades of armed struggle between the “great powers for the artificial preservation of capitalism by means of colonies, monopolies, privileges and national oppression of every kind.”

### War Between the Biggest Slave-Owners for Preserving and Fortifying Slavery

To explain the significance of imperialism, we will quote exact figures showing the division of the world among the so-called “great” (i.e., successful in great plunder) powers:

Division of the World Among the “Great” Slave-owning Powers								
“Great” Powers	Colonies				Metropolises		Total	
	1876		1914		1914			
	Square kilo- metres	Inhab- itants	Square kilo- metres	Inhab- itants	Square kilo- metres	Inhab- itants	Square kilo- metres	Inhab- itants
	millions	millions	millions	millions	millions	millions	millions	millions
<b>England</b>	22.5	251.9	33.5	393.5	0.3	46.5	33.8	440.0
<b>Russia</b>	17.0	15.9	17.4	33.2	5.4	136.2	22.8	169.4
<b>France</b>	0.9	6.0	10.6	55.5	0.5	39.6	11.1	95.1
<b>Germany</b>	–	–	2.9	12.3	0.5	64.9	3.4	77.2
<b>Japan</b>	–	–	0.3	19.2	0.4	53.0	0.7	72.2
<b>United States of America</b>	–	–	0.3	9.7	9.4	97.0	9.7	106.7
<b>Six “great” powers</b>	40.4	273.8	65.0	523.4	16.5	437.2	81.5	960.6
<b>Colonies belonging <i>not</i> to great powers (but to Belgium, Holland and other states)</b>			9.9	45.3			9.9	45.3
<b>Three “semi-colonial” countries (Turkey, China and Persia)</b>							14.5	361.2
						<b>Total</b>	105.9	1,367.1
<b>Other states and countries</b>							28.0	289.9
<b>Entire globe (without Polar regions)</b>							133.9	1,657.0



From this it is seen how most of the nations which fought at the head of others for freedom in 1798-1871, have now, after 1876, on the basis of highly developed and “override” capitalism, become the oppressors and enslavers of the majority of the populations and nations of the globe. From 1876 to 1914, six “great” powers grabbed 25 million sq. kilometres, i.e., an area two and a half times that of Europe! Six powers are enslaving over half a billion (521 million) inhabitants of colonies. For every four inhabitants of the “great” powers there are five inhabitants of “their” colonies. And everybody knows that colonies are conquered by fire and sword, that the populations of colonies are brutally treated, that they are exploited in a thousand ways (by exporting capital, concessions, etc., cheating when selling them goods, subordination to the authorities of the “ruling” nation, and so on and so forth). The Anglo-French bourgeoisie are deceiving the people when they say that they are waging war for the freedom of nations and for Belgium; actually they are waging war for the purpose of retaining the colonies they have inordinately grabbed. The German imperialists would free Belgium, etc., at once if the British and French would agree “fairly” to share their colonies with them. The peculiarity of the situation lies in that in this war the fate of the colonies is being decided by war on the Continent. From the standpoint of bourgeois justice and national freedom (or the right of nations to existence), Germany would be absolutely right as against England and France, for she has been “done out” of colonies, her enemies are oppressing an immeasurably far larger number of nations than she is, and the Slavs who are oppressed by her ally Austria undoubtedly enjoy far more freedom than those in tsarist Russia, that real “prison of nations.” But Germany is fighting not for the liberation, but for the oppression of nations. It is not the business of Socialists to help the younger and stronger robber (Germany) to rob the older and overgorged robbers. Socialists must take advantage of the struggle between the robbers to overthrow them all. To be able to do this, the Socialists must first of all tell the people the truth, namely, that this war is in a treble sense a war between slave-owners to fortify slavery. This is a war firstly, to fortify the enslavement of the colonies by means of a “fairer” distribution and subsequent more “concerted exploitation of them”; secondly, to fortify the oppression of other nations within the “great” powers, for both

Austria and Russia (Russia more and much worse than Austria) maintain their rule only by such oppression, intensifying it by means of war; and thirdly, to fortify and prolong wage slavery, for the proletariat is split up and suppressed, while the capitalists gain, making fortunes out of the war, aggravating national prejudices and intensifying reaction, which has raised its head in all countries. even in the freest and most republican.

**“War is the Continuation of Politics by Other” (i.e., Violent) “Means”<sup>6)</sup>**

This famous aphorism was uttered by one of the profoundest writers on the problems of war, Clausewitz. Marxists have always rightly regarded this thesis as the theoretical basis of views concerning the significance of every given war. It was precisely from this viewpoint that Marx and Engels always regarded different wars.

Apply this view to the present war. You will see that for decades, for almost half a century, the governments and the ruling classes of England, and France, and Germany, and Italy, and Austria, and Russia, pursued a policy of plundering colonies, of oppressing other nations, of suppressing the working-class movement. It is this, and only this policy that is being continued in the present war. In particular, the policy of both Austria and Russia peace-time as well as in war, is a policy of enslaving and not of liberating nations. In China, Persia, India and other dependent countries, on the contrary, we have seen during the past decades a policy of rousing tens and hundreds of millions of people to national life, of liberating them from the oppression of the reactionary “great” powers. A war on such a historical ground can even today be a bourgeois-progressive, national-liberation war.

It is sufficient to glance at the present war from the viewpoint that it is a continuation of the politics of the great powers, and of the principal classes within them, to see at once the howling anti-historicalness, falsity and hypocrisy of the view that the “defence of the fatherland” idea can be justified in the present war.

**The Example of Belgium**

The favourite plea of the social-chauvinist triple (now quadruple) entente<sup>7)</sup> (in Russia, Plekhanov and Co.), is

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6) See Karl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, Berlin 1957, Vol.I, p.4.

7) An imperialist alliance of Britain, France, Russia and Italy. The latter

the example of Belgium. But this example goes against them. The German imperialists shamelessly violated the neutrality of Belgium, as belligerent states have done always and everywhere, trampling upon all treaties and obligations if necessary. Let us suppose that all the states interested in the observation of international treaties declared war on Germany with the demand for the liberation and indemnification of Belgium. In such a case, the sympathies of Socialists would, of course, be on the side of Germany's enemies. But the whole point is that the "triple (and quadruple) entente" is waging war not over Belgium, this is perfectly well known, and only hypocrites conceal this. England is grabbing Germany's colonies and Turkey; Russia is grabbing Galicia and Turkey, France wants Alsace-Lorraine and even the left bank of the Rhine; a treaty has been concluded with Italy for the division of the spoils (Albania, Asia Minor); bargaining is going on with Bulgaria and Rumania, also for the division of the spoils. In the present war waged by the present governments it is impossible to help Belgium without helping to strangle Austria or Turkey, etc.! How does "defence of the fatherland" come in here? Herein, precisely, lies the specific feature of imperialist war, war between reactionary-bourgeois, historically obsolete governments, waged for the purpose of oppressing other nations. Whoever justifies participation in the present war perpetuates imperialist oppression of nations. Whoever advocates taking advantage of the present embarrassments of the governments to fight for the social revolution champions the real freedom of really all nations, which is possible only under Socialism.

### **What is Russia Fighting For?**

In Russia, capitalist imperialism of the latest type has fully revealed itself in the policy of tsarism towards Persia, Manchuria and Mongolia; but, in general, military and feudal imperialism predominates in Russia. In no country in the world is the majority of the population oppressed so much as it is in Russia; Great Russians constitute only 43 per cent of the population, i.e., less than half; all the rest are denied rights as aliens. Of the 170 million inhabitants of Russia, about 100 million are oppressed and denied rights. Tsarism is waging war to seize Galicia and finally to crush the liberties of the Ukrainians, to seize Armenia,

Constantinople, etc. Tsarism regards the war as a means of diverting attention from the growth of discontent within the country and of suppressing the growing revolutionary movement. At the present time, for every two Great Russians in Russia there are from two to three rightless "aliens": tsarism is striving by means of the war to increase the number of nations oppressed by Russia, to perpetuate this oppression and thereby undermine the struggle for freedom which the Great Russians themselves are waging. The possibility of oppressing and robbing other nations perpetuates economic stagnation, because, often, the source of income is not the development of productive forces, but the semi-feudal exploitation of "aliens." Thus, on the part of Russia, the war is distinguished for its profoundly reactionary and anti-liberating character.

### **What is Social-Chauvinism?**

Social-chauvinism is advocacy of the idea of "defence of the fatherland" in the present war. Further, this idea logically leads to the abandonment of the class struggle during the war, to voting war credits, etc. Actually, the social-chauvinists are pursuing an anti-proletarian, bourgeois policy; for actually, they are championing not "defence of the fatherland" in the sense of fighting foreign oppression, but the "right" of one or other of the "great" powers to plunder colonies and to oppress other nations. The social-chauvinists repeat the bourgeois deception of the people that the war is being waged to protect the freedom and existence of nations, and thereby they go over to the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. In the category of social-chauvinists are those who justify and embellish the governments and bourgeoisie of one of the belligerent groups of powers, as well as those who, like Kautsky, argue that the Socialists of all the belligerent powers have an equal right to "defend the fatherland." Social-chauvinism, being actually defence of the privileges, advantages, robbery and violence of one's "own" (or every) imperialist bourgeoisie, is the utter betrayal of all socialist convictions and of the decision of the Basle International Socialist Congress.

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joined after breaking away from the Triple Alliance.



### **The Basle Manifesto<sup>8)</sup>**

The manifesto on war that was unanimously adopted in Basle in 1911 had in view the very war between England and Germany and their present allies that broke out in 1914. The manifesto openly declares that no plea of the interests of the people can justify such a war, waged “for the sake of the profits of the capitalists” and “the ambitions of dynasties” on the basis of the imperialist, predatory policy of the great powers. The manifesto openly declares that war is dangerous “for the governments” (all without exception), notes their fear of “a proletarian revolution,” and very definitely points to the example of the Commune of 1871, and of October-December 1905, i.e., to the examples of revolution and civil war. Thus, the Basle Manifesto lays down, precisely for the present war, the tactics of revolutionary struggle by the workers on an international scale against their governments, the tactics of proletarian revolution. The Basle Manifesto repeats the statement in the Stuttgart resolution that, in the event of war breaking out, Socialists must take advantage of the “economic and political crisis” it will cause, to “hasten the downfall of capitalism,” i.e., to take advantage of the governments’ embarrassments and the anger of the masses, caused by the war, for the socialist revolution.

The policy of the social-chauvinists, their justification of the war from the bourgeois-liberation standpoint, their sanctioning of “defence of the fatherland,” voting credits, entering cabinets, and so on and so forth, is downright treachery to Socialism, which can be explained only, as we will see lower down, by the victory of opportunism and of the national-liberal labour policy in the majority of European parties.

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8) The Basle Manifesto on the war issue was unanimously adopted at the special congress of the Second International held on November 4-25, 1912, at Basle, Switzerland. The manifesto revealed the predatory aims of the war the imperialists were preparing and urged workers everywhere resolutely to combat the war danger. The manifesto proposed that in the event of an imperialist war breaking out, Socialists should take advantage of the economic and political crisis to precipitate the socialist revolution. (On the Basic Manifesto, see also V.I. Lenin, *The Collapse of the Second International*, Collected Works, Eng. ed., International Publishers, New York 1930, Vol. XVIII, pp.273-82.)

At the Basic Congress Kautsky, Vandervelde and the other leaders of the Second International voted for the Manifesto, but as soon as the world war broke out in 1914, they went back on it, and sided with their imperialist governments.

### **False References to Marx and Engels**

The Russian social-chauvinists (headed by Plekhanov), refer to Marx’s tactics in the war of 1870; the German (of the type of Lensch, David and Co.) to Engels’ statement in 1891 that in the event of war against Russia and France together, it would be the duty of the German Socialists to defend their fatherland; and lastly, the social-chauvinists of the Kautsky type, who want to reconcile and legitimatise international chauvinism, refer to the fact that Marx and Engels, while condemning war, nevertheless, constantly, from 1870-1871 and 1876-1877, took the side of one or another belligerent state once war had broken out.

All these references are outrageous distortions of the views of Marx and Engels in the interest of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists, in just the same way as the writings of the Anarchists Guillaume and Co. distort the views of Marx and Engels in justification of anarchism. The war of 1870-1871 was a historically progressive war on the part of Germany until Napoleon III was defeated; for the latter, together with the tsar, had oppressed Germany for many years, keeping her in a state of feudal disintegration. But as soon as the war developed into the plunder of France (the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine), Marx and Engels emphatically condemned the Germans. And even at the beginning of that war Marx and Engels approved of the refusal of Bebel and Liebknecht to vote for credits and advised the Social-Democrats not to merge with the bourgeoisie, but to uphold the independent class interests of the proletariat. To apply the appraisal of this bourgeois-progressive and national-liberating war to the present imperialist war means mocking at truth. The same applies with still greater force to the war of 1854-1855, and to all the wars of the nineteenth century, when there was no modern imperialism, no ripe objective conditions for Socialism, and no mass Socialist parties in any of the belligerent countries, i.e., none of the conditions from which the Basle Manifesto deduced the tactics of “proletarian revolution” in connection with a war between the great powers.

Whoever refers today to Marx’s attitude towards the wars of the epoch of the progressive bourgeoisie and forgets Man’s statement that “the workers have no fatherland,” a statement that applies precisely to the epoch of the reactionary, obsolete bourgeoisie, to the epoch of the socialist revolution, shamelessly distorts

Marx and substitutes the bourgeois for the socialist point of view.

### **The Collapse of the Second International**

The Socialists of all the world solemnly declared in Basle, in 1912, that they regarded the impending war in Europe as the “criminal” and most reactionary affair of all the governments, which must hasten the downfall of capitalism by inevitably calling forth a revolution against it. The war came, the crisis came. Instead of revolutionary tactics, the majority of the Social-Democratic parties conducted reactionary tactics, went over to the side of their respective governments and bourgeoisie. This betrayal of Socialism signifies the collapse of the Second (1889-1914) International, and we must understand what caused this collapse, what brought social-chauvinism into being, what gave it strength.

### **Social-Chauvinism is Consummated Opportunism**

During the whole epoch of the Second International, a struggle raged everywhere in the Social-Democratic parties between the revolutionary and the opportunist wings. In a number of countries a split has taken place along this line (England, Italy, Holland, Bulgaria). Not a single Marxist has any doubt that opportunism expresses bourgeois policy within the working-class movement, expresses the interests of the petty bourgeoisie and the alliance of a tiny section of bourgeoisified workers with “their” bourgeoisie against the interests of the proletarian masses, the oppressed masses.

The objective conditions of the end of the nineteenth century exceptionally intensified opportunism, converted the utilization of bourgeois legality into subservience to it, created a tiny stratum of bureaucrats and aristocrats within the working class, and drew into the ranks of the Social-Democratic parties numerous petty-bourgeois “fellow travellers.”

The war accelerated this development and transformed opportunism into social-chauvinism, transformed the secret alliance between the opportunists and the bourgeoisie into an open one. Simultaneously, the military authorities everywhere have introduced martial law and have muzzled the mass of the workers, whose old leaders have nearly all gone over to the bourgeoisie.

Opportunism and social-chauvinism have the same

economic basis: the interests of a tiny stratum of privileged workers and of the petty bourgeoisie who are defending their privileged position, their “right” to crumbs of the profits “their” national bourgeoisie obtain from robbing other nations, from the advantages of their position as the ruling nation, etc.

Opportunism and social-chauvinism have the same ideological-political content: collaboration of classes instead of class struggle, renunciation of revolutionary methods of struggle, helping one’s “own” government in its embarrassed situation instead of taking advantage of these embarrassments for revolution. If we take all the European countries as a whole, if we pay attention not to individuals (even the most authoritative), we will find that it is the opportunist trend that has become the chief bulwark of social-chauvinism, whereas from the camp of the revolutionaries, more or less consistent protests against it are heard nearly everywhere. And if we take, for example, the grouping of trends at the Stuttgart International Socialist Congress in 1907,<sup>9)</sup> we will find that international Marxism was opposed to imperialism, while international opportunism was in favour of it already at that time.

### **Unity with the Opportunists Means Alliance Between the Workers and “Their” National Bourgeoisie and Splitting the International Revolutionary Working Class**

In the past epoch, before the war, although opportunism was often regarded as a “deviationist,” “extremist” part of the Social-Democratic Party, it was nevertheless regarded as a legitimate part. The war has shown that this cannot be so in future. Opportunism has “matured,” is now playing to the full its role as emissary of the

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9) The Stuttgart international Socialist Congress, held on August 18-24, 1907. At this congress the R.S.D.L.P. was represented by 37 delegates. Lenin, Lunacharsky, Litvinov and others represented the Bolsheviks.

Most of the work of the congress was conducted in commissions, which drafted resolutions for submission to the plenary sessions. Lenin was a member of the commission that drafted the resolution on Militarism and International Conflicts. Jointly with Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin moved his historic amendment to Bebel’s resolution, declaring that it was the duty of Socialists to take advantage of the crisis brought about by war to rouse the masses for the overthrow of capitalism. The congress accepted this amendment. (On the congress see V.I. Lenin, *The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart*, Selected Works, Eng. ed., Lawrence and Wishart, London 1943, Vol.IV, pp.314-23, and *Collected Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. XIII, pp.59-65.)

bourgeois in the working-class movement. Unity with the opportunists has become sheer hypocrisy, an example of which we see in the German Social-Democratic Party. On all important occasions (for example, the voting on August 4),<sup>10)</sup> the opportunists come forward with an ultimatum, which they carry out with the aid of their numerous connections with the bourgeoisie, of their majority on the executives of the trade unions, etc. Unity with the opportunists actually means today, subordinating the working class to “its” national bourgeoisie, alliance with it for the purpose of oppressing other nations and of fighting for great-power privileges, it means splitting the revolutionary proletariat in all countries.

Hard as the struggle may be, in individual cases, against the opportunists who predominate in many organisations, peculiar as the process of purging the workers’ parties of opportunists may be in individual countries, this process is inevitable and fruitful. Reformist Socialism is dying; regenerated Socialism “will be revolutionary, uncompromising and insurrectionary,” to use the apt expression of the French Socialist Paul Golay.

### “Kautskyism”

Kautsky, the biggest authority in the Second International, gives us a highly typical and glaring example of how the verbal recognition of Marxism has led actually to its conversion into “Struveism”,<sup>11)</sup> or into “Brentanoism.”<sup>12)</sup> We see this also from the example of Plekhanov. By means of obvious sophistry they rob Marxism of its revolutionary living spirit; they recognise everything in Marxism except revolutionary

methods of struggle, the preaching of and preparation for such methods, and the training of the masses precisely in this direction. Kautsky, in an unprincipled fashion, “reconciles” the fundamental idea of social-chauvinism, recognition of defence of the fatherland in the present war, with a diplomatic, sham concession to the Leftists, the shape of abstaining from voting credits, the verbal claim of being in the opposition, etc. Kautsky, who in 1909 wrote a whole book on the approaching epoch of revolutions and on the connection between war and revolutions, Kautsky, who in 1912 signed the Basle Manifesto on taking revolutionary advantage of the impending war, is now, in every way, justifying and embellishing social-chauvinism and, like Plekhanov, joins the bourgeoisie in ridiculing all thought of revolution, all steps towards direct revolutionary struggle.

The working class cannot play its world-revolutionary role unless it wages a ruthless struggle against this renegacy, spinelessness, subservience to opportunism and unexampled vulgarization of the theories of Marxism. Kautskyism is not fortuity, but a social product of the contradictions within the Second International, a combination of loyalty to Marxism in words and subordination to opportunism in deeds.

This fundamental falseness of “Kautskyism” manifests itself in different ways in different countries. In Holland, Roland-HoIst while rejecting the idea of defending the fatherland, defends unity with the opportunists’ party. In Russia Trotsky, while also rejecting this idea, also defends unity with the opportunist and chauvinist Nasha Zarya group. In Rumania, Rakovsky, while declaring war on opportunism as being responsible for the collapse of the International, is at the same time ready to recognise the legitimacy of the idea of defending the fatherland. All this is a manifestation of the evil which the Dutch Marxists (Gorter and Pannekoek) have called “passive radicalism”, and which amounts to substituting for Marxism eclecticism in theory and servility to, or impotence in the face of, opportunism in practice.

The Marxists’ Slogan is the Slogan of Revolutionary Social-Democracy

The war has undoubtedly created a most acute crisis and has increased the distress of the masses to an incredible degree. The reactionary character of this war, and the shameless lies told by the bourgeoisie of all countries in covering up their predatory aims with

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10) The voting on August 4 – On August 4, 1914, the Social-Democratic group in the German Reichstag voted in favour of granting the government of Wilhelm II war credits and for supporting the imperialist war. The leaders of German Social-Democracy betrayed the working class and took up the position of social-chauvinism and of defence of their imperialist bourgeoisie.

11) Struveism – see pp. 19 of this book.

12) Brentanoism – a bourgeois reformist theory which “recognised the ‘school of capitalism’, but rejected the school of the revolutionary class struggle” (Lenin). Lujo Brentano, a German bourgeois economist, advocate of so-called “State Socialism,” tried to prove that it was possible to achieve social equality within the capitalist system by means of reforms and the conciliation of the interests of the capitalists and the workers. Under the cloak of Marxist phraseology, Brentano and his followers tried to subordinate the working-dan movement to the interests of the bourgeoisie.

“national” ideology, are inevitably creating, on the basis of an objectively revolutionary situation, revolutionary moods among the masses. It is our duty to help the masses to become conscious of these moods, to deepen and formulate them. This task is correctly expressed only by the slogan: convert the imperialist war into civil war; and all consistently waged class struggles during the war, all seriously conducted “mass action” tactics inevitably lead to this. It is impossible to foretell whether a powerful revolutionary movement will flare up during the first or the second war of the great powers, whether during or after it; in any case, our bounden duty is systematically and undeviatingly to work precisely in this direction.

The Basle Manifesto refers directly to the example set by the Paris Commune, i.e., to the conversion of a war between governments into civil war. Half a century ago, the proletariat was too weak; the objective conditions for Socialism had not yet ripened; there could be no coordination and cooperation between the revolutionary movements in all the belligerent countries; the “national ideology” (the traditions of 1792), with which a section of the Parisian workers were imbued, was their petty-bourgeois weakness, which Marx noted at the time, and was one of the causes of the fall of the Commune. Half a century after it, the conditions that weakened the revolution at that time have passed away, and it is unpardonable for a Socialist at the present time to resign himself to the abandonment of activities precisely in the spirit of the Paris Communards.

### **The Example Shown by the Fraternisation in the Trenches**

The bourgeois newspapers of all the belligerent countries have reported cases of fraternisation between the soldiers of the belligerent nations even in the trenches. And the issue by the military authorities (of Germany, England) of draconic orders against such fraternisation proved that the governments and the bourgeoisie attached grave importance to it. The fact that such cases of fraternisation have been possible even when opportunism reigns supreme in the top ranks of the Social-Democratic parties of Western Europe, and when social-chauvinism is supported by the entire Social-Democratic press and by all the authorities of the Second International, shows us how possible it would be to shorten the present criminal, reactionary

and slave-owners’ war and to organise a revolutionary international movement if systematic work were conducted in this direction, if only by the Left-wing Socialists in all the belligerent countries.

### **The Importance of an Underground Organisation**

The most prominent Anarchists all over the world, no less than the opportunists, have disgraced themselves with social-chauvinism (in the spirit of Plekhanov and Kautsky) in this war. One of the useful results of this war will undoubtedly be that it will kill both anarchism and opportunism.

While under no circumstances or conditions refraining from utilizing all legal possibilities, however small, for the purpose of organizing the masses and of preaching Socialism, the Social-Democratic parties must break with subservience to legality. “You shoot first, Messieurs the Bourgeoisie,”<sup>13)</sup> wrote Engels, hinting precisely at civil war and at the necessity of our violating legality after the bourgeoisie had violated it. The crisis has shown that the bourgeoisie violate it in all countries, even the freest, and that it is impossible to lead the masses to revolution unless an underground organisation is set up for the purpose of advocating, discussing, appraising and preparing revolutionary methods of struggle. In Germany, for example, all the honest things that Socialists are doing, are being done in spite of despicable opportunism and hypocritical “Kautskyism”, and are being done secretly. In England, people are sent to penal servitude for printing appeals against joining the army.

To regard the repudiation of underground methods of propaganda, and ridiculing the latter in the legally published press, as being compatible with membership of the Social-Democratic Party is treachery to Socialism.

### **Concerning Defeat of “One’s Own” Government in the Imperialist War**

Both the advocates of victory for their governments in the present war and the advocates of the slogan “neither victory not defeat”, equally take the standpoint of social-chauvinism. A revolutionary class cannot but wish for the defeat of its government in a reactionary war, cannot fail to see that its military reverses facilitate its overthrow. Only a bourgeois who believes that a war

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13) Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Der Sozialismus in Deutschland*, Collected Works, Ger. ed., Berlin 1963, Vol.XXII, p. 251.



started by the governments must necessarily end as a war between governments and wants it to end as such, can regard as “ridiculous” and “absurd” the idea that the Socialists of all the belligerent countries should wish for the defeat of all “their” governments and express this wish. On the contrary, it is precisely a statement of this kind that would conform to the cherished thoughts of every class-conscious worker, and would be in line with our activities towards converting the imperialist war into civil war.

Undoubtedly, the serious anti-war agitation that is being conducted by a section of the British, German and Russian Socialists has “weakened the military power” of the respective governments, but such agitation stands to the credit of the Socialists. Socialists must explain to the masses that they have no other road of salvation except the revolutionary overthrow of “their” governments, and that advantage must be taken of these governments’ embarrassments in the present war precisely for this purpose.

### **Pacifism and the Peace Slogan**

The sentiments of the masses in favour of peace often express incipient protest, anger and consciousness of the reactionary character of the war. It is the duty of all Social-Democrats to utilise these sentiments. They will take a most ardent part in every movement and in every demonstration on this ground; but they will not deceive the people by conceding the idea that peace without annexations, without the oppression of nations, without plunder, without the germs of new wars among the present governments and ruling classes is possible in the absence of a revolutionary movement. Such a deception of the people would merely play into the hands of the secret diplomacy of the belligerent governments and facilitate their counter-revolutionary plans. Whoever wants a lasting and democratic peace must be in favour of civil war against the governments and the bourgeoisie.

### **The Right of Nations to Self-Determination**

The most widespread deception of the people perpetrated by the bourgeoisie in the present war is the concealment of its predatory aims with “national-liberation” ideology. The English promise the liberation of Belgium, the Germans of Poland, etc. Actually, as we have seen, this is a war waged by the oppressors of the majority of the nations of the world for the purpose of

fortifying and expanding such oppression.

Socialists cannot achieve their great aim without fighting against all oppression of nations. Therefore, they must without fail demand that the Social-Democratic parties of oppressing countries (especially of the so-called “great” powers) should recognise and champion the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, precisely in the political sense of the term, i.e., the right to political secession. The Socialist of a ruling or colony-owning nation who fails to champion this right is a chauvinist.

The championing of this right, far from encouraging the formation of small states, leads, on the contrary, to the freer, fearless and therefore wider and more widespread formation of very big states and federations of states, which are more beneficial for the masses and more fully in keeping with economic development.

The Socialists of oppressed nations must, in their turn, unflinchingly fight for the complete (including organisational) unity of the workers of the oppressed and oppressing nationalities. The idea of the juridical separation of one nation from another (so-called “cultural-national autonomy” advocated by Bauer and Renner) is reactionary.

Imperialism is the epoch of the constantly increasing oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of “great” powers and, therefore, it is impossible to fight for the socialist international revolution against imperialism unless the right of nations to self-determination is recognized. “No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations” (Marx and Engels). A proletariat that tolerates the slightest violence by “its” nation against other nations cannot be a socialist proletariat.

## **Chapter II. Classes and Parties in Russia**

### **The bourgeoisie and the war**

To one respect, the Russian government has not lagged behind its European confrères; like them, it has succeeded in deceiving “its” people on a grand scale. A huge, monstrous machine of falsehood and cunning was set going in Russia too for the purpose of infecting the masses with chauvinism, of creating the impression that the tsarist government is waging a “just” war, that it is disinterestedly defending its “brother Slavs,” etc.

The landlord class and the upper stratum of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie ardently

supported the tsarist government's bellicose policy. They are rightly expecting enormous material gains and privileges for themselves out of the partition of the Turkish and the Austrian legacy. A whole series of their congresses already have a foretaste of the profits that would flow into their pockets if the tsarist army were victorious. Moreover, the reactionaries are very well aware that if anything can postpone the downfall of the Romanov monarchy and delay the new revolution in Russia, it can only be a foreign war that ends in victory for the tsar.

Broad strata of the urban "middle" bourgeoisie, of the bourgeois intelligentsia, professional people, etc., were also infected with chauvinism—at all events at the beginning of the war. The Cadets—the party of the Russian liberal bourgeoisie—wholly and unreservedly supported the tsarist government. In the sphere of foreign policy the Cadets have long been a government party. Pan-Slavism – with the aid of which tsarist diplomacy has more than once carried out its grand political swindles—has become the official ideology of the Cadets. Russian liberalism has degenerated into national liberalism. It is vying in "patriotism" with the Black Hundreds; it always willingly votes for militarism, on land and sea, etc. In the camp of Russia liberalism, approximately the same thing is observed as was seen in the 70s in Germany when "free-thinking" liberalism decayed and from it arose a national-liberal party. The Russian liberal bourgeoisie has definitely taken the path of counter-revolution. The point of view of the R.S.D.L.P. on this question has been fully confirmed. Life has shattered the view held by our opportunists that Russian liberalism is still a motive force of the revolution in Russia.

Among the peasantry, the ruling clique, with the aid of the bourgeois press, the clergy, etc., also succeeded in rousing chauvinist sentiments. But, as the soldiers return from the field of slaughter, sentiment in the rural districts will undoubtedly turn against the tsarist monarchy. The bourgeois-democratic parties that come in contact with the peasantry failed to withstand the chauvinist wave. The Trudovik party in the State Duma refused to vote for war credits; but through the mouth of its leader Kerensky it made a "patriotic" declaration which played extremely well into the hands of the monarchy. The entire legally published press of the "Narodniks" in general, trailed behind the liberals. Even

the Left-wing of bourgeois democracy—the so-called Socialist-Revolutionary Party, which is affiliated to the International Socialist Bureau—floated in the same stream. Mr. Rubanovich, that party's representative on the I.S.B., comes out as an open social-chauvinist. Half of this party's delegates at the London Conference of "Entente" Socialists voted for a chauvinist resolution (while the other half abstained from voting). In the illegally published press of the Socialist-Revolutionaries (the newspaper *Novosti*<sup>14</sup>) and others) chauvinists predominate. The revolutionaries "from bourgeois circles," i.e., the bourgeois revolutionaries not connected with the working class, have suffered utter bankruptcy in this war. The sad fate of Kropotkin, Burtsev and Rubanovich is extremely significant.

### **The working class and the war**

The only class in Russia that they did not succeed in infecting with chauvinism is the proletariat. Only the most ignorant strata of the workers were involved in the few excesses that occurred at the beginning of the war. The part played by workers in the Moscow anti-German riots was greatly exaggerated. In general, and on the whole, the working class of Russia proved to be immune to chauvinism.

This is to be explained by the revolutionary situation in the country and by the general conditions of life of the Russian proletariat.

The years 1912–1914 marked the beginning of a new, grand revolutionary upswing in Russia. We again witnessed a great strike movement such as the world has not known. The number involved in the mass revolutionary strike in 1913 was, at the very lowest estimation, one and a half million, and in 1914 it rose above two million and drew near to the level of 1905. On the eve of the war, in St. Petersburg, things had already developed to the first barricade battles.

The underground Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party performed its duty to the International to the full. The banner of internationalism did not falter in its hands. Our Party had broken organisationally with the opportunist groups and elements long ago; its feet were not weighted with the fetters of opportunism and of "legalism at any price," and this circumstance helped it

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14) *Novosti* (News)—a daily Socialist-Revolutionary Party newspaper published in Paris from August 1914 to May 1915.—Ed.



to perform its revolutionary duty—just as the break-away from Bissolati’s opportunist party helped the Italian comrades too.

The general situation in our country is inimical to the efflorescence of “socialist” opportunism among the masses of the workers. In Russia we see a whole series of shades of opportunism and reformism among the intelligentsia, the petty bourgeoisie, etc.; but it constitutes an insignificant minority among the politically active strata of the workers. The privileged stratum of workers and office employees in our country is very weak. The fetishism of legality could not be created here. The Liquidators (the party of the opportunists led by Axelrod, Potressov, Cherevanin, Maslov, and others) found no serious support among the masses of the workers before the war. The elections to the Fourth State Duma resulted in the return of all the six anti-liquidator worker deputies. The circulation of and collection of funds for the legally published workers’ press in Petrograd and Moscow have proved irrefutably that four-fifths of the class-conscious workers are opposed to opportunism and liquidationism.

Since the beginning of the war the tsarist government has arrested and exiled thousands and thousands of advanced workers, members of our underground R.S.D.L.P. This circumstance, together with the introduction of martial law in the country, the suppression of our newspapers, and so forth, has retarded the movement. But for all that, our Party is continuing its underground revolutionary activities. In Petrograd, the committee of our Party is publishing the underground newspaper *Proletarsky Golos*.<sup>15)</sup>

Articles from the Central Organ *Sotsial-Demokrat*, published abroad, are reprinted in Petrograd and sent out to the provinces. Manifestoes are secretly printed and circulated even in soldiers’ barracks. In various secluded places outside the city, secret workers’ meetings are held. Lately big strikes of metal workers have begun in Petrograd. In connection with these strikes our Petrograd Committee has issued several appeals to the workers.

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15) *Proletarsky Golos* (*Proletarian Voice*)—a newspaper, organ of the St. Petersburg Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., published underground from February 1915 to December 1916. Four numbers appeared. Its first issue published the manifesto of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. entitled: *The War and Russian Social-Democracy*.—Ed.

### **The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Group in the State Duma and the war**

In 1913 a split occurred among the Social-Democratic deputies in the State Duma. On one side were the seven supporters of opportunism led by Chkheidze. They were elected for the seven non-proletarian gubernias<sup>16)</sup> where the workers numbered 214,000. On the other side were six deputies, all from workers’ curiae, elected for the most industrialised centres in Russia, in which the workers numbered 1,008,000.

The chief issue in the split was: the tactics of revolutionary Marxism or the tactics of opportunist reformism? In practice, the disagreement manifested itself mainly in the sphere of work outside of parliament among the masses. In Russia this work had to be conducted secretly if those conducting it wanted to remain on revolutionary ground. The Chkheidze group remained a faithful ally of the Liquidators who repudiated underground work, and defended them in all talks with the workers, at all meetings. Hence the split. The six deputies formed the R.S.D.L. group. The year’s work has shown irrefutably that this is the group that the overwhelming majority of the Russian workers supports.

On the outbreak of the war the disagreement stood out in glaring relief. The Chkheidze group confined itself to parliamentary action. It did not vote for credits, for had it done so it would have roused against itself a storm of indignation among the workers. (We have seen that in Russia even the petty-bourgeois *Trudoviki* did not vote for credits); but it did not utter a protest against social-chauvinism either.

The R.S.D.L. group, expressing the political line of our Party, acted differently. It carried into the very depths of the working class a protest against the war; it conducted anti-imperialist propaganda among the broad masses of the Russian proletarians.

And it met with a very sympathetic response among the workers – which frightened the government and compelled it, in flagrant violation of its own laws, to arrest our comrades, the deputies, and to sentence them to lifelong exile in Siberia. In its very first official announcement of the arrest of our comrades the tsarist government wrote:

An entirely exceptional position in this respect was taken by some members of Social-Democratic societies,

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16) Provinces.—Ed.

the object of whose activities was to shake the military might of Russia by agitating against the war by means of underground appeals and verbal propaganda.

In response to Vandervelde's well-known appeal "temporarily" to stop the struggle against tsarism—it has now become known from the evidence of Prince Kudashev, the tsar's envoy in Belgium, that Vandervelde did not draw up this appeal alone, but in collaboration with the above-mentioned tsar's envoy – only our Party, through its Central Committee, replied in the negative. The guiding centre of the Liquidators agreed with Vandervelde and officially stated in the press that "in its activities it will not counteract the war."

The tsarist government's primary charge against our comrades, the deputies, was that they propagated this negative answer to Vandervelde among the workers.

At the trial, the tsarist Prosecutor, Mr. Nenarokomov, set up the German and French Socialists as examples for our comrades. "The German Social-Democrats," he said, "voted for the war credits and proved to be the friends of the government. That is how the German Social-Democrats acted, but the dismal knights of Russian Social-Democracy did not act in this way ... The Socialists of Belgium and France unanimously forgot their quarrels with other classes, forgot party strife and unhesitatingly rallied round the flag." But the members of the R.S.D.L. group, obeying the instructions of the Central Committee of the Party, did not act in this way, he said ...

The trial unfolded an imposing picture of the extensive, underground and-war agitation our Party was conducting among the masses of the proletariat. It goes without saying that the tsarist court did not by a very long way reveal all the activities our comrades were conducting in this sphere; but even what was revealed showed how much, had been done within the short space of a few months.

At the trial the secret manifestoes issued by our groups and committees against the war and for international tactics were read. Threads stretched from the class-conscious workers all over Russia to the members of the R.S.D.L. group, and the latter did all in its power to help the workers to appraise the war from the standpoint of Marxism.

Comrade Muranov, the deputy of the workers of the Kharkov Gubernia, said at the trial:

"Understanding that the people did not send me into

the State Duma for the purpose of wearing out the seat of a Duma armchair, I travelled about the country to ascertain the mood of the working class." He admitted at the trial that he took upon himself the function of a secret agitator of our Party, that in the Urals he organised a workers' committee at the Verkhneisetsky Works, and in other places. The trial showed that after the war broke out members of the R.S.D.L. group travelled through almost the whole of Russia for propaganda purposes, that Muranov, Petrovsky, Badayev and others arranged numerous workers' meetings, at which anti-war resolutions were passed, and so forth.

The tsarist government threatened the accused with capital punishment. Owing to this, not all of them behaved at the actual trial as bravely as Comrade Muranov. They tried to make it difficult for the tsarist prosecutors to secure their conviction. The Russian social-chauvinists are now meanly utilising this to obscure the essence of the question: what kind of parliamentarism does the working class need?

Parliamentarism is recognized by Südekum and Heine, Sembat and Valiant, Bissolati and Mussolini, Chkheidze and Plekhanov, and parliamentarism is recognised by our comrades in the R.S.D.L. Duma group; it is recognised by the Bulgarian and Italian comrades who have broken with the chauvinists. There are different kinds of parliamentarism. Some utilise the parliamentary arena in order to win the favour of their governments, or, at best, to wash their hands of everything, like the Chkheidze group. Others utilise parliamentarism in order to remain revolutionary to the end, to perform their duty as Socialists and internationalists even under the most difficult circumstances. The parliamentary activities of some bring them into ministerial seats; the parliamentary activities of others bring them to prison, to exile, to penal servitude. Some serve the bourgeoisie, others—the proletariat. Some are social-imperialists. Others are revolutionary Marxists.

### **Chapter III. The Restoration of the International**

How should the International be restored? But first, a few words about how the International should not be restored.

#### **The method of the social-chauvinists and of the "centre"**

Oh, the social-chauvinists of all countries are big

“internationalists”! Since the very beginning of the war they have been burdened with care for the International. On the one hand, they assure us that the talk about the collapse of the International is “exaggerated.” Actually, nothing exceptional has occurred. Listen to Kautsky: simply, the International is a “peacetime instrument”; naturally, this instrument was found to be somewhat not up to the mark in wartime. On the other hand, the social-chauvinists of all countries have found a very simple—and chiefly, an international – way out of the situation that has arisen. A simple way out: it is only necessary to wait until the war ends; but until the war ends the Socialists of each country must defend their fatherland and support “their” government; when the war ends—mutual “amnesty,” admission that everybody was right, that in peacetime we live like brothers, but in wartime we—on the basis of such and such resolutions—call upon the German workers to exterminate their French brothers, and vice versa.

On this Kautsky and Plekhanov and Victor Adler and Heine are equally agreed. Victor Adler writes that “when we have passed through this hard time, our first duty will be to refrain from pointing to the mote in each other’s eye.” Kautsky asserts that “up till now no voices of serious Socialists have been heard from any side that rouse apprehensions” concerning the fate of the International. Plekhanov says that “it is unpleasant to grasp the hands” (of the German Social-Democrats) “that reek of the blood of the innocently killed.” But he at once goes on to propose an “amnesty”: “here it will be quite appropriate,” he writes, “to subordinate the heart to the mind. For the sake of the great cause, the International will have to take into consideration even belated remorse.” Heine in *Sozialistische Monatshefte* describes Vandervelde’s behaviour as “courageous and proud,” and sets him up—an example for the German Lefts.

In short, when the war ends, appoint a commission consisting of Kautsky and Plekhanov, Vandervelde and Adler and a “unanimous” resolution in the spirit of mutual amnesty will be drawn up in a trice. The dispute will be safely covered up. Instead of helping the workers to understand what has occurred, they will deceive them with sham, paper “unity.” The amalgamation of the social-chauvinists and hypocrites of all countries will be described as the restoration of the International.

We must not conceal from ourselves the fact that the

danger of such a “restoration is very great. The social-chauvinists of all countries are equally interested in it.” All of them are equally unwilling that the masses of the workers themselves should try to grasp the issue: Socialism or nationalism? All of them are equally interested in coveting up each other’s sins. None of them is able to propose anything except what is proposed by that virtuoso in “international” hypocrisy, Kautsky.

And yet, this danger is scarcely realised. During the year of war we have witnessed a number of attempts to restore international connections. We will not speak of the conferences in London and Vienna, at which downright chauvinists assembled to help the General Staffs and the bourgeoisie of their “fatherlands.” We have in mind the conferences in Lugano<sup>17)</sup> and Copenhagen,<sup>18)</sup> the International Women’s Conference<sup>19)</sup> and the International Youth Conference.<sup>20)</sup> These assemblies were inspired by the best wishes. But they totally failed to see the above-mentioned danger. They did not lay down a fighting line for internationalists. They did not point out to the proletariat the danger that threatens

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17) This refers to a conference of Italian and Swiss Socialists held in Lugano, Switzerland, on September 27, 1914.—Ed.

18) The Copenhagen Conference of Socialists in neutral countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Holland) was held on January 17–18, 1915 for the purpose of restoring the Second International. The conference resolved to appeal, through the parliamentary representatives of the Socialist Parties in the neutral countries, to their governments to act as intermediaries between the belligerent powers and secure the cessation of the war.—Ed.

19) The International Socialist Women’s Conference on the attitude to be taken towards the war was held in Berne, Switzerland, on March 26–28, 1915. The conference was convened on the initiative of the women’s organisations connected with the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. in conjunction with Clara Zetkin, the leader of the international women’s movement. Twenty-five delegates were present at the conference, representing England, Germany, France, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Russia and Poland. Among the delegates from Russia were N.K. Krupskaya and Inessa Armand.

A report of the proceedings of the International Socialist Women’s Conference was published as a supplement to the newspaper *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 42, of June 1, 1915.—Ed.

20) The International Socialist Youth Conference on the attitude to be taken towards the war was held in Berne, Switzerland, on April 4–6, 1915. Representatives were present from youth organisations of ten countries: Russia, Norway, Holland, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Germany, Poland, Italy, Denmark and Sweden. The conference decided to celebrate International Youth Day every year and elected an international Bureau of Socialist Youth which, in conformity with the conference’s decision, began to publish the magazine *Jugend-Internationale* (Youth International), to which Lenin and Karl Liebknecht contributed.—Ed.

it from the social-chauvinists' method of "restoring" the International. At best, they confined themselves to repeating the old resolutions without indicating to the workers that unless a struggle is waged against the social-chauvinists, the cause of Socialism is hopeless. At best they marked time.

### **The state of affairs among the opposition**

There can be no doubt whatever that what interests all internationalists most is the state of affairs among the German Social-Democratic opposition. Official German Social-Democracy, which was the strongest and the leading party in the Second International, struck the heaviest blow at the international workers' organisation. But at the same time, it was in German Social-Democracy that the strongest opposition was found. Of all the big European parties, it was in the German party that the loud voice of protest of the comrades who have remained loyal to the banner of Socialism was first raised. It was with joy that we read the magazines *Lichtstrahlen* and *Die Internationale*. With still greater joy we learned of the distribution in Germany of secretly printed manifestoes, as for example the manifesto entitled: *The Chief Enemy Is at Home*. This showed that the spirit of Socialism is alive among the German workers, that there are still people in Germany capable of upholding revolutionary Marxism.

The split in the present-day socialist movement has been most strikingly revealed within German Social-Democracy. Here we very distinctly see three trends: the opportunist-chauvinists, who have nowhere sunk to such a degree of renegacy as they have in Germany; the Kautskyan "Centre," which has here proved to be incapable of playing any other role than that of servitors of the opportunists; and the Left—who are the only Social-Democrats in Germany.

Naturally, what interests us most of all is the state of affairs among the German Left. In it we see our comrades, the hope of all the internationalist elements.

### **What is the state of affairs in it?**

The magazine *Die Internationale* was quite right when it wrote that the German Left was still in a state of ferment, that considerable regroupings still lie ahead in it, that there are more resolute and less resolute elements within it.

We Russian internationalists do not in the least,

of course, claim the right to interfere in the internal affairs of our comrades the German Lefts. We are aware that they alone are fully competent to determine their methods of fighting the opportunists in conformity with the conditions of time and place. Only, we deem it our right and duty frankly to express our opinion on the state of affairs.

We are convinced that the author of the leading article in the magazine *Die Internationale* was profoundly right when he asserted that the Kautskyan "Centre" is doing more harm to Marxism than avowed social-chauvinism. Whoever now obscures disagreements, whoever now, in the guise of Marxism, preaches to the workers what Kautskyism is preaching, is lulling the workers, is more harmful than the Südekums and Heines, who put the question bluntly and compel the workers to try to grasp the issue.

The fact that Kautsky and Haase are permitting themselves lately to demur against the "official bodies" should mislead nobody. The disagreements between them and the Scheidemanns are not on fundamentals. The former believe that Hindenburg and Mackensen are already victorious and that they can already permit themselves the luxury of protesting against annexations. The latter believe that Hindenburg and Mackensen are not yet victorious and that, therefore, it is necessary "to bold out to the end."

Kautskyism is waging only a sham fight against the "official bodies" precisely in order to be able, after the war, to obscure the fundamental dispute for the workers and to gloss the matter over with the 1,001st puffy resolution couched in a vaguely "Leftist" spirit, in the drafting of which the diplomats of the Second International are such masters.

It is quite understandable that in their arduous struggle against the "official bodies" the German opposition should also make use of this unprincipled opposition raised by Kautskyism. But what must remain the touchstone for every internationalist is hostility towards neo-Kautskyism. Only he is a genuine internationalist who fights Kautskyism, who understands that, fundamentally, the "Centre," even after the sham turn taken by its leaders, remains an ally of the chauvinists and opportunists.

Of enormous importance is our attitude towards the wavering elements in the International in general. These elements—mainly Socialists of the pacifist shade—are



to be found both in the neutral countries and in some of the belligerent countries (in England, for example, the Independent Labour Party).<sup>21)</sup> These elements can be our fellow travellers. Rapprochement with them in opposition to the social-chauvinists is necessary. But it must be borne in mind that they are only fellow travellers, that on the chief and fundamental issues, with the restoration of the International, these elements will go not with us, but against us, they will go with Kautsky, Scheidemann, Vandervelde and Sembat. At international conferences we must not limit our programme to what is acceptable to these elements. If we do, we will become the captives of the wavering pacifists. This is what happened, for example, at the International Women's Conference in Berne. The German delegation, which supported Comrade Clara Zetkin's point of view, actually played the part of the "Centre" at this conference. The Women's Conference said only what was acceptable to the delegates from the opportunist Dutch party led by Troelstra, and to the delegates of the Independent Labour Party, which—we will not forget this—at the London conference of "Entente" chauvinists voted for Vandervelde's resolution. We express our greatest respect for the I.L.P. for the brave struggle it has been waging against the British government during the war. But we know that this party has not adopted the Marxist stand. We, however, are of the opinion that the chief task of the Social-Democratic opposition at the present moment is to raise the banner of revolutionary Marxism, to tell the workers firmly and definitely how we regard imperialist wars, to issue the watchword of mass revolutionary action, i.e., transform the epoch of imperialist wars into the beginning of the epoch of civil wars.

In spite of everything, there are revolutionary Social-

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21) The Independent Labour Party was formed in 1893 under such leaders as James Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald. It claimed to be politically independent of the bourgeois parties; actually it was "independent of Socialism, but dependent upon liberalism" (Lenin). At the beginning of the imperialist world war (1914–18) the Independent Labour Party issued a manifesto against the war on August 13, 1914, but later, at the London Conference of Entente Socialists in February 1915, its representatives supported the social-chauvinist resolution adopted by that conference. From that time onward, the I.L.P. leaders, under cover of pacifist phrases, adopted a social-chauvinist position. With the formation of the Communist International in 1919, the I.L.P. leaders, yielding to the pressure of the rank and file, which had swung to the left, resolved to withdraw from the Second International. In 1921, the I.L.P. joined the so-called Two-and-a-Half International, and after its collapse re-affiliated to the Second International.—Ed.

Democratic elements in many countries. They are to be found in Germany, and in Russia, and in Scandinavia (the influential trend of which Comrade Höglund is the representative), and in the Balkans (the party of the Bulgarian "Tesnyaki"<sup>22)</sup>), and in Italy, and in England (a section of the British Socialist Party),<sup>23)</sup> and in France (Vaillant himself has admitted in *L'Humanité* that he has received letters of protest from internationalists, but he has not published one of them in full), and in Holland (the *Tribunists*),<sup>24)</sup> etc. To rally these Marxist elements—however small their numbers may be at the beginning—to recall in their name the now forgotten words of genuine Socialism, to call upon the workers of all countries to break with the chauvinists and to come under the old banner of Marxism—such is the task of the day.

Conferences with so-called programmes of "action" have amounted up till now only to the proclamation, more or less fully, of the programme of simple pacifism. Marxism is not pacifism. It is necessary, of course, to fight for the speediest termination of the war. But only if a revolutionary struggle is called for does the demand

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22) Tesnyaki—the revolutionary Social-Democratic Labour Party of Bulgaria, was formed in 1903 after a breakaway from the Social-Democratic Party. Dimitr Blagoyev, founder and leader of the Tesnyaki, was succeeded by his followers Georgi Dimitrov and Vasil Kolarov. During 1914–18, the Tesnyaki opposed the imperialist war. In 1919 it affiliated to the Communist International and formed the Communist Party of Bulgaria.—Ed.

23) The British Socialist Party was formed in 1911. It conducted Marxist propaganda and agitation and was described by Lenin as "not opportunist," and as "really independent of the Liberals." Its small membership and isolation from the masses lent the party a somewhat sectarian character. During the imperialist world war (1914–18), two trends were revealed in the party: one openly social-chauvinist, headed by Henry Hyndman, and the other internationalist, headed by Albert Inkpin and others. In April 1916 a split took place. Hyndman and his supporters found themselves in the minority and withdrew from the party. From that moment the internationalists assumed the leadership of the British Socialist Party, which later initiated the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1920.—Ed.

24) The *Tribunists*—a Left group in the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Holland which in 1907 published the newspaper *De Tribune*. In 1909, the *Tribunists* were expelled from the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Holland and organised an independent party (the Social-Democratic Party of Holland). The *Tribunists* were not a consistently revolutionary party, but they represented the Left wing of the working-class movement of Holland. In 1918 the *Tribunists* formed the Communist Party of Holland. From 1909, *De Tribune* was the organ of the Social-Democratic Party of Holland, and from 1918 it was the organ of the Communist Party. From the beginning of the 30s to 1940 it came out under the title of *Folksdagblad* (The People's Daily).—Ed.

for “peace acquire proletarian meaning. Without a series of revolutions, so-called democratic peace is a philistine utopia. The purpose of a real programme of action would be served only by a Marxian programme, which gave the masses a full and clear explanation of what has occurred, which explained what imperialism is and how to combat it, which openly stated that it was opportunism that led to the collapse of the Second International, which openly called for the building of a Marxist International without and against the opportunists. Only such a programme as would show that we have confidence in ourselves, confidence in Marxism, that we proclaim a life-and-death struggle against opportunism would sooner or later ensure for us the sympathy of the genuine proletarian masses.

### **The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and the Third International**

The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party split away from its opportunists long ago. The Russian opportunists have now, in addition, become chauvinists. This only strengthens our opinion that a split from them in the interests of Socialism is essential. We are convinced that the Social-Democrats’ present disagreements with the social-chauvinists are in no way less wide than the Socialists’ disagreements with the Anarchists when the Social-Democrats split away from the latter. The opportunist Monitor rightly said in *Preussische Jahrbücher* that the present unity was to the advantage of the opportunists and the bourgeoisie because it compelled the Lefts to submit to the chauvinists and prevents the workers from grasping the issue and from forming their own genuinely workers’, genuinely socialist party. We are most firmly convinced that in the present state of affairs, a split from the opportunists and chauvinists is the primary duty of the revolutionary—just as a split from the yellows, the anti-Semites, the liberal workers’ unions, etc., was essential precisely in the interests of the speediest enlightenment of the backward workers and of drawing them into the ranks of the Social-Democratic Party.

In our opinion, the Third International should be built on precisely such a revolutionary basis. For our Party, the question as to whether it is expedient to break with the social-chauvinists does not exist. For it, this question has been irrevocably settled. The only question that exists for our Party is whether this can be achieved in the nearest

future on an international scale.

It is quite understandable that to bring about an international Marxist organisation, there must be a readiness to form independent Marxist parties in different countries. Germany, being the country with the oldest and strongest working-class movement, is of decisive importance. The immediate future will show whether conditions have already ripened for the formation of a new, Marxist International. If they have, our Party will gladly join such a Third International that will be purged of opportunism and chauvinism. If they have not, it will show that a more or less prolonged evolution is needed for this purging. In that case, our Party will be the extreme opposition within the old International—until a base is formed in different countries for an international working men’s association that stands on the basis of revolutionary Marxism.

We do not, nor can we, know, what developments will take place in the international arena within the next few years. But there is one thing we know for certain, and of which we are unshakably convinced, namely, that our Party, in our country, among our proletariat, will work tirelessly in the above-mentioned direction, and by all its daily activities will build up the Russian section of the Marxist International.

In Russia too we have no lack of avowed social-chauvinists and “Centre” groups. These people will fight against the formation of a Marxist International. We know that Plekhanov, in principle, stands on the same ground as Südekum and is already stretching out a hand to him. We know that the so-called “Organisation Committee” led by Axelrod is preaching Kautskyism on Russian soil. In the guise of working-class unity, these people are preaching unity with the opportunists and, through them, with the bourgeoisie. But everything we know about the present working-class movement in Russia fully convinces us that the class-conscious proletariat in Russia will, as hitherto, remain with our Party.

### **Chapter IV. The History of the Split and the Present State of Social-Democracy in Russia**

The above-described tactics of the R.S.D.L.P. in relation to the war are the inevitable result of the thirty years’ development of Social-Democracy in Russia. These tactics, and the present state of Social-Democracy in our country, cannot be properly understood unless one



ponders over the history of our Party. That is why we must here to remind the reader about the major facts in this history.

As an ideological trend, Social-Democracy arose in 1883, when Social-Democratic views applied to Russia were for the first time systematically expounded abroad by the Emancipation of Labour Group. Until the beginning of the nineties, Social-Democracy remained an ideological trend with no connection with the mass working-class movement in Russia. At the beginning of the nineties, the upswing of the social movement, the unrest and strike movement among the workers, transformed Social-Democracy into an active political force inseparably connected with the struggle (both economic and political) of the working class. And from that very moment Social-Democracy began to split into “Economists” and “Iskra-ists.”

### **The “Economists” and the old Iskra (1894–1903)**

“Economism” was an opportunist trend in Russian Social-Democracy. Its political essence was summed up in the programme: “for the workers – the economic struggle; for the liberals – the political struggle.” Its chief theoretical prop was so-called “legal Marxism” or “Struveism” which “recognised” a “Marxism” that was completely purged of every scrap of revolutionary spirit and was adapted to the requirements of the liberal bourgeoisie. On the plea that the masses of the workers in Russia were immature, and wishing to “march with the masses,” the “Economists” restricted the tasks and scope of the working-class movement to the economic struggle and political support for liberalism, and did not set themselves independent political or any revolutionary tasks.

The old Iskra<sup>25)</sup> (1900–1903) waged a victorious struggle against “Economism” for the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy. The entire flower of the class-conscious proletariat took the side of Iskra. For a number of years before the revolution Social-Democracy advocated the most consistent and uncompromising programme. Both the class struggle and the action of the masses during the 1905 revolution confirmed

the correctness of this programme. The “Economists” adapted themselves to the backwardness of the masses. Iskra trained the vanguard of the workers that was capable of leading the masses forward. The arguments at present advanced by the social-chauvinists (that it is necessary to reckon with the masses, that imperialism is progressive, about the “illusions” harboured by revolutionaries, etc.), had all been advanced by the Economists. The opportunist alteration of Marxism to the “Struveist” style became known to Social-Democracy in Russia twenty years ago.

### **Menshevism and Bolshevism (1903–1908)**

The epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolution gave rise to a new struggle between trends in Social-Democracy that was the direct continuation of the preceding struggle. “Economism” changed into “Menshevism.” The championing of the revolutionary tactics of the old Iskra gave rise to “Bolshevism.”

In the turbulent years of 1905–1907, Menshevism was an opportunist trend backed by the bourgeois liberals, and carded liberal-bourgeois trends into the working-class movement. Adaptation of the working-class struggle to liberalism – such was its substance. Bolshevism, on the contrary, set the Social-Democratic workers the task of rousing the democratic peasantry for the revolutionary struggle despite the vacillation and treachery of liberalism. And the masses of the workers, as the Mensheviks themselves admitted more than once, marched with the Bolsheviks during the revolution in all the biggest actions.

The 1905 revolution tested, strengthened, deepened and steeled the uncompromisingly revolutionary Social-Democratic tactics in Russia. The open actions of classes and parties repeatedly disclosed the connection between Social-Democratic opportunism (“Menshevism”) and liberalism.

### **Marxism and Liquidationism (1908–1914)**

The counter-revolutionary epoch again, in an entirely new form, placed the question of the opportunist and revolutionary tactics of Social-Democracy on the order of the day. The chief current of Menshevism, in spite of the protests of many of its best representatives, gave rise to the trend of liquidationism, renunciation of the struggle for a new revolution in Russia, renunciation of secret organisation and activity, contempt for and ridicule of

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25) Iskra (The Spark), founded by Lenin in 1900, was the first all-Russian, Marxist newspaper published underground. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. it became the central organ of the Party. In speaking of the old Iskra, Lenin is referring to Iskra from No.1 to No.51. With No.52, the Mensheviks converted the paper into their factional organ.—Ed.

the “underground,” of the slogan of a republic, etc. The group of legal writers for the magazine *Nasha Zarya* (Messrs. Potresov, Cherevanin, and others) constituted a nucleus, independent of the old Social-Democratic Party, which in a thousand ways was supported, boosted and nursed by the liberal bourgeoisie of Russia which wanted to wean the workers from the revolutionary struggle.

This group of opportunists was expelled from the Party by the January Conference of the R.S.D.L.P., 1912,<sup>26)</sup> which restored the Party in spite of the furious resistance of a number of groups and coteries abroad. For more than two years (beginning of 1912 to the middle of 1914) a stubborn struggle raged between the two Social-Democratic parties: the Central Committee that was elected in January 1912 and the “Organisation Committee” which refused to recognise the January Conference and wanted to restore the Party in a different way, by maintaining unity with the *Nasha Zaryagroup*. A stubborn struggle raged between the two daily workers’ newspapers (*Pravda* and *Luch*<sup>27)</sup> and their successors), and between the two Social-Democratic groups in the Fourth State Duma (the R.S.D.L. group of Pravdists, or Marxists, and the “Social-Democratic group” of the Liquidators headed by Chkheidze).

Championing loyalty to the Party’s revolutionary principles, fostering the incipient revival of the working-class movement (especially after the spring of 1911), combining underground with open organisation, press and agitation, the Pravdists raffled around themselves the overwhelming majority of the class-conscious working class, whereas the Liquidators—who as a political force operated exclusively through the *Nasha Zarya* group—leaned on the all-round support of the liberal-bourgeois elements.

The open financial contributions of workers’ groups to the newspapers of the two parties, which was at that time a form of Social-Democratic membership dues adapted to Russian conditions (and the only one legally possible and freely verifiable by all), strikingly confirmed the proletarian source of the strength and influence of the Pravdists (Marxists) and the bourgeois-liberal source

27) *Luch* (The Ray) – the daily newspaper of the liquidator-Mensheviks, published legally in St. Petersburg from September 1912 to July 1913. It was maintained “by funds provided by rich friends among the bourgeoisie” (Lenin).—Ed.

of that of the Liquidators (and their “O.C.”). Here are brief figures of these contributions, which are given in full in the book *Marxism and Liquidationism*<sup>28)</sup> and in an abbreviated form in the German Social-Democratic newspaper *The Leipzig People’s Paper*<sup>29)</sup> of July 21, 1914.

**Number and amounts of contributions to the daily St. Petersburg newspapers, Marxist (Pravdist) and liquidationist, from January 1 to May 13, 1914:**

Thus, by 1914, our Party had united four-fifths of the class-conscious workers of Russia around revolutionary Social-Democratic tactics. For the whole of 1913 the Pravdists received contributions from 2,181 workers’ groups and the Liquidators from 661. The figures

	Pravdist		Liquidationist	
	Number of contributions	Amount in rbls.	Number of contributions	Amount in rbls.
<b>From workers’ groups</b>	2,873	18,934	671	5,296
<b>From non-workers’ groups</b>	713	2,650	453	6,760

from January 1, 1913 to May 13, 1914 will be: 5,054 contributions from workers’ groups for the Pravdists (that is, for our Party), and ,1,332, i.e., 20.8 per cent, for the liquidators.

**Marxism and Social-Chauvinism (1914–1915)**

The great European war of 1914–1915 gave all the European and also the Russian Social-Democrats the opportunity to test their tactics on a crisis of world-wide dimensions. The reactionary, predatory and slave-owner character of the war stands out in immeasurably more striking relief in the case of tsarism than it does

28) *Marxism and Liquidationism* – subtitled *A Collection of Articles on the Fundamental Problems of the Present-Day Working-Class Movement*. Part II, it was published by the Party Publishing House *Priboy* in July 1914. It contained articles by Lenin against the Liquidators. In referring to this book, Lenin has in mind his articles: *The Working Class and the Workers’ Press* and *The Workers’ Response to the Formation of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Group in the State Duma* (see V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol.XX, pp.338-45, 503-09).—Ed.

29) *The Leipzig People’s Paper* (*Leipziger Volkszeitung*), organ of the Left wing of the German Social-Democratic Party. Published daily from 1894 to 1933. For a long time Franz Mehring and Rosa Luxemburg were members of its editorial board. From 1917 to 1922 the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* was the organ of the German “independents.” In 1922 it became the organ of the Right-wing Social-Democrats.—Ed.

in the case of the other governments. Nevertheless, the major group of Liquidators (the only group besides ours which has serious influence in Russia thanks to its liberal connections) turned towards social-chauvinism! Enjoying a monopoly of legality for a fairly long period, this Nasha Zarya group conducted propaganda among the masses in favour of “non-resistance to the war,” of wishing for the victory of the triple (now quadruple) entente, accusing German imperialism of “super-diabolical sins,” etc. Plekhanov, who, since 1903, has repeatedly given examples of his extreme political spinelessness and desertion to opportunism, took up still more pronouncedly the very position that is so highly praised by the whole of the bourgeois press of Russia. Plekhanov has sunk so low as to declare that tsarism is waging a just war, and to publish an interview in the government newspapers in Italy urging her to enter the war!!

The correctness of our appraisal of liquidationism and of the expulsion of the major group of liquidators from our Party is thus fully confirmed. The real programme of the Liquidators and the real significance of their trend now constitute not only opportunism in general, but defence of the imperialist privileges and advantages of the Great-Russian landlords and bourgeoisie. It is a national-liberal labour policy trend. It is an alliance of a section of the radical petty bourgeoisie and a tiny handful of privileged workers with “their” national bourgeoisie against the mass of the proletariat.

### **The Present State of Affairs in Russian Social-Democracy**

As we have already said, neither the Liquidators, nor a number of groups abroad (those of Plekhanov, Alexinsky, Trotsky and others), nor the so-called “national” (i.e., non-Great Russian) Social-Democrats have recognised our Conference of January 1911. Among the innumerable epithets hurled against us, those most often repeated were “usurpers” and “splitters.” We answered by quoting exact and objectively verifiable figures showing that our Party united four-fifths of the class-conscious workers in Russia. This is no small figure considering the difficulties of underground activities in a counter-revolutionary epoch.

If “unity” were possible in Russia on the basis of Social-Democratic tactics without expelling the Nasha Zarya group, why have not our numerous opponents brought

it about even among themselves? No less than three and a half years have passed since January 1912, and during the whole of this time our opponents, much as they have desired to do so, have failed to form a Social-Democratic party in opposition to us. This fact is our Party’s best defence.

The entire history of the Social-Democratic groups that are fighting our Party is a history of collapse and disintegration. In March 1912, all of them without exception “united” in abusing us. But already in August 1912, when the so-called “August bloc” was formed against it, disintegration began among them. Some of the groups fell away from them. They could not form a party and a Central Committee. They set up only an Organisation Committee “for the purpose of restoring unity.” Actually, this O.C. turned out to be a feeble cover for the liquidationist group in Russia. During the whole period of the tremendous upswing of the working-class movement in Russia and of the mass strikes of 1912–1914, the only group in the entire August bloc that conducted activities among the masses was the Nasha Zarya group, whose strength lay in its liberal connections. And at the beginning of 1914, the Lettish Social-Democrats officially withdrew from the “August bloc” (the Polish Social-Democrats did not join it), while Trotsky, one of the leaders of the bloc, left it unofficially, having again formed his own separate group. In July 1914, at the conference in Brussels, with the participation of the Executive Committee of the I.S.B., Kautsky and Vandervelde, the so-called “Brussels bloc” was formed against us, which the Letts did not join, and from which the Polish opposition Social-Democrats forthwith withdrew. When the War broke out this bloc collapsed. Nasha Zarya, Plekhanov, Alexinsky and An,<sup>30)</sup> the leader of the Caucasian Social-Democrats, became open social-chauvinists, preaching the desirability of Germany’s defeat. The O.C. and the Bund defended the social-chauvinists and the principles of social-chauvinism. The Chkheidze Duma group, although it voted against the war credits (in Russia, even the bourgeois democrats, the Trudoviki, voted against them), remained Nasha Zarya’s faithful ally. Our extreme social-chauvinists, Plekhanov, Alexinsky and Co., were quite pleased with the Chkheidze group. In Paris, the newspaper *Nashe Slovo* (formerly *Golos*)

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30) An – N.N. Jordania, leader of the Caucasian Mensheviks.—Ed.

was started, with the participation mainly of Martov and Trotsky, who wanted to combine platonic defence of internationalism with the absolute demand for unity with Nasha Zarya, the O.C. or the Chkheidze group. After 150 issues of this newspaper, it was itself forced to admit its disintegration: one section of the editorial board gravitated towards out Party, Martov remained faithful to the O.C. which publicly censured *Nashe Slovo* for its “anarchism” (just as the opportunists in Germany, David and Co., *Internationale Konespondenz*,<sup>31)</sup> Legien and Co. charge Comrade Liebknecht with anarchism); Trotsky announced his rupture with the O.C., but wanted to go with the Chkheidze group. Here are the programme and tactics of the Chkheidze group, enunciated by one of its leaders. In No.5, 1915 of *Sovremenny Mir*<sup>32)</sup>, magazine of the Plekhanov and Alexinsky trend, Chkhenkeli writes: “To say that German Social-Democracy was in a position to prevent its country from going to war but failed to do so would mean either secretly wishing that it should not only have breathed its last breath on the barricades but also have had its fatherland breathe it, last, or looking at nearby things through an anarchist telescope.”<sup>33)</sup>

These few lines express the sum and substance of social-chauvinism: both the justification on principle of the “defence of the fatherland” idea and mockery—with the permission of the military censors—at the preaching and preparation of revolution. It is not at all a question as to whether German Social-Democracy was or was not in a position to prevent war, nor whether, in general, revolutionaries can guarantee the success of a revolution. The question is: should we behave like

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31) *Internationale Korrespondenz* – a weekly run by German social-chauvinists which dealt with problems of international politics and the working-class movement. Published in Berlin from 1914 to 1917.—Ed.

32) *Sovremenny Mir* (The Contemporary World) – a literary, scientific and political monthly published in St. Petersburg from 1906 to 1918. The Mensheviks, including G.V. Plekhanov, were frequent contributors. Bolsheviks also contributed to the magazine during the period of the bloc with Plekhanov’s group of pro-Party Mensheviks, and at the beginning of 1914.

In March 1914, the magazine published Lenin’s article *Socialism Annihilated Once Again* (see V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. XX, pp.167-88). During the imperialist world war (1914–18), it became the organ of the social-chauvinists.—Ed.

33) S.M. No.5, 1915. Trotsky announced recently that he deemed it his task to raise the prestige of the Chkheidze group in the International. No doubt Chkhenkeli will with equal energy raise Trotsky’s prestige in the International ...—Ed.

Socialists or really “breathe our last” in the embrace of the imperialist bourgeoisie?

### **Our Party’s Tasks**

Social-Democracy in Russia arose before the bourgeois-democratic revolution (1905) in our country and gained strength during the revolution and counter-revolution. The backwardness of Russia explained the extraordinary multiplicity of trends and shades of petty-bourgeois opportunism in our country; and the influence of Marxism in Europe and the stability of the legally existing Social-Democratic parties before the war converted our exemplary liberals into near-admirers of the “reasonable”, “European” (non-revolutionary), “legal” “Marxist” theory and Social-Democracy. The working class of Russia could not build up its party otherwise than in a resolute, thirty-year struggle against all the varieties of opportunism. The experience of the world war, which has brought about the shameful collapse of European opportunism and has strengthened the alliance of our national-liberals with social-chauvinist liquidationism, still further strengthens our conviction that our Party must continue further along the same consistently revolutionary road.

## **Glory to the heroes of Stalingrad!**

**Harpal Brar** | Communist Party of Great Britain  
(Marxist-Leninist)

This titanic achievement of the socialist Soviet Union is one the imperialists are incapable of erasing or explaining away.

The second of February this year marked the 80th anniversary of the battle of Stalingrad, a battle of titanic proportions. Before we deal with this battle, which changed the course of the second world war, some background information as to events leading up to the battle is in order.

The Soviet leadership well understood early on that the conditions for war were ripening; that the Versailles treaty that ended the first world war was the basis of nothing more than a truce between wars; and that the



war to come would be one of horrendous proportions. The Soviet Union did not want war, but it was not up to her to stand aside.

In the words of Stalin “If war begins, we shall hardly be able to sit with folded arms. We shall have to come out, but we ought to be the last to come out. And we should come out in order to throw the decisive weight on the scales, the weight that should tip the scales.” (Address to the central committee of the CPSU(B), 19 January 1925)

This being the case, the Soviet Union worked for the maintenance of peace and to delay the onset of the war, and her own involvement in it, so as to build her own economic and military might.

With the passing of the years, it became clear that the Soviet Union, even if she wanted to, could not remain a spectator. In his stewardship of foreign policy, Stalin showed “great caution, restraint and realism. He needed time to build up Russia’s industries and military strength. He was constantly provoked in the east and the west, and in many ways that must have infuriated him, but he never lost sight of the overriding need to delay the outbreak of the war as long as possible. It was for this reason that he placed the greatest emphasis on peace and disarmament in world affairs.” (Ian Grey, Stalin – Man of History, 1979, p296)

### **Pursuit of collective security**

With this in mind, the Soviet leadership pursued a policy of collective security and, in the early 1930s, the Soviet Union negotiated non-aggression pacts with Poland and Finland.

In 1933, with the ascent of Hitler to power in Germany, war clouds gathered over Europe. While the Nazi leadership became increasingly aggressive and vituperative, Stalin remained cautious. Careful not to provoke Nazi Germany, Stalin became disturbed by Hitler’s bellicose declaration: “The German-Polish non-aggression pact suggested that he [Hitler] was fostering Poland’s claims to Ukraine and perhaps envisaging that the two countries might somehow share the vast steppes between them.” (Ian Grey, p298)

In the summer of 1934, the USSR signed non-aggression treaties with Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria. However, Stalin well understood that the centuries-old hostility of the Poles towards Russia made them the Soviet Union’s most dangerous neighbours.

In 1935, the USSR began exploring the possibility of

seeking some accommodation with other capitalist countries. The United States, enjoying great prosperity in the 1920s, had come to delude itself into believing in the superiority of capitalism, refusing even to recognise the Soviet government. The economic depression that began with the crash of 1929 and the need to counter the increasing dominance of Japan in the Pacific had had a sobering effect on the USA and ushered in a change in US policy in 1933.

The Roosevelt administration, on coming into office, recognised the Soviet Union, and, on 13 July 1935, the signature of a trade agreement promised somewhat friendlier relations between the two countries.

In October 1936, the Berlin-Rome axis was formed, followed by the formation of the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern pact on 25 November 1936. In March 1938, Nazi Germany seized Austria. The Soviet Union responded to these developments by proposing that Britain, France and the USSR should present a united front against Germany.

The British and French governments, however, spurning Soviet attempts at collective security that might delay or even avert war, went on to hold the shameful Munich conference with Hitler on 28-30 September 1938, where they surrendered Czechoslovakia into Nazi hands.

The Soviet Union was not even consulted about this conference, let alone invited to participate. Western imperialist countries refused to respond to the Soviet proposals for a grand alliance.

In the words of British wartime prime minister Winston Churchill: “The Soviet offer was in effect ignored. They were not brought into the scale against Hitler and were treated with our indifference – not to say disdain – which left a mark on Stalin’s mind. Events took their course as if Russia did not exist. For this we afterwards paid dearly.” (The Second World War, Volume 1, pp239-240)

The hatred of communism had clearly won out over all other considerations. Stalin understood the motives that underlay Britain and France’s agreeing to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by Germany: “One might think that the districts of Czechoslovakia were yielded to Germany as the prize for her undertaking to launch war on the Soviet Union,” he wrote. (Report on the work of the central committee, Eighteenth congress of the CPSU(B), 10 March 1939)

There was not an iota of doubt in Stalin's mind that Britain and France were giving every encouragement to Germany to march east, leaving them to enjoy peace while Germany and the USSR destroyed one other.

Having met stubborn refusal by France and Britain to enter into a collective security agreement, the Soviet Union was obliged to look for some other way of defending her interests. On 10 March 1939, Stalin delivered a speech at the eighteenth party congress in which he castigated the western powers for the concessions they had made and the motives underlying their behaviour:

"The war is being waged by aggressor states [ie, Germany, Italy and Japan] who in every way infringe the interests of the non-aggressive states, primarily England, France and the USA while the latter draw back and retreat, making concession after concession to the aggressors." They were activated, said Stalin, by the fear of revolution, but also by the policy of letting the Soviet Union and Germany "weaken and exhaust one another, and when they had become weak enough they would appear on the scene with fresh strength and dictate conditions to the enfeebled belligerents. That would be cheap and easy."

Concluding his report, he said: "We stand for peaceful, close and neighbourly relations with all the neighbouring countries having common frontiers with the USSR."

On 15 March 1939, German troops invaded Czechoslovakia. Stalin sent a note of protest to Berlin. Public opinion in the west was outraged by the rape of Czechoslovakia. Up to the last, the Soviet Union had tried her level best to reach some sort of agreement with the western powers, but to no avail.

"For Stalin," said Ian Grey, "the inescapable conclusion was that the leaders of the British government were so blinded by hostility towards the Soviet regime that not even to avert the horrors of war would they consider an alliance with Soviet Russia against Germany." (Stalin – Man of History, p307)

### **Non-aggression pact with Germany**

Stalin's foremost concern was to gain time to allow for the strengthening of Soviet industry and the armed forces. His second concern was that the Soviet Union should not be in the position of fighting the war he

knew was coming on its own, let alone of having to fight against the combined forces of the foremost imperialist countries.

Reluctantly, he now turned to the possibility of a non-aggression pact with Germany. Even as late as 4 August 1939, Schulenburg, the German ambassador to Moscow, had reported to Berlin that the Soviet government was, in fact, "more prepared for improvement in German-Soviet relations, but the old mistrust of Germany persists.

"My overall impression is that the Soviet government is at present determined to sign with England and France, if they fulfil the Soviet wishes. Negotiations, to be sure, might still last a long time, especially since the mistrust of England is also great ... It will take a considerable effort on our part to cause the Soviet government to swing about." (Churchill, p305)

Impatient though he was to invade Poland, as well as deeply disturbed by the presence of the Anglo-French military mission in Moscow, Hitler made every effort to court the Soviets. Faced with the time-wasting tactics of the British, and seeing that negotiations with them were going nowhere, Stalin responded favourably to Hitler's urgent telegram of 20 August, requesting him to receive German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop on 22 or at the latest 23 August.

On the night of 23 August, Stalin received Ribbentrop, and the text of a non-aggression pact was agreed. This freed Hitler to launch his invasion of Poland and gave the Soviet Union more time to prepare. Churchill observed that "at the moment", this policy was "realistic to a high degree". (The Second World War, Volume 1, p307)

### **Outbreak of World War 2**

On 1 September 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Two days later the Anglo-French ultimatum expired and France and Britain were at war with Germany. All their anti-Soviet manoeuvres had landed them in this situation. Soviet defence industries made gigantic efforts to catch up. The USSR knew it needed time: and every month counted.

In the spring of 1940, the lightning advances of Nazi armies in the west gave further urgency to Soviet preparations: "The German occupation of Norway and Denmark was followed in May by the invasion of the low countries and evacuation of British troops at Dunkirk.



“But the most shattering to the Russians was the abysmal collapse of France and the German occupation of Paris on 14 June. Stalin had expected that the French army, secure behind the Maginot line, would be more than a match for Germany. Attention focused on Britain, now under Churchill ... there was general fear that Britain would make peace with Germany, freeing Hitler to turn eastwards. Soviet industrial production was accelerated.” (Ian Grey, p316)

The Soviet government did its best to delay war with Germany – a war which it knew was not far off. There were conflicting intelligence reports and rumours of German troop concentrations that signalled an imminent German invasion.

“Stalin regarded these reports with scepticism. He remained deeply mistrustful of Britain. There was, it seems, no limit to the perfidy of which he believed Britain capable. He was convinced that Britain and the United States were doing everything possible to incite Hitler to attack Russia and that Britain in particular saw a German campaign in the east as the one way to save herself from catastrophe.

“He believed that the British government had recently held secret talks with Nazi officials, seeking to reach an agreement at the expense of Russia. The flight of Hitler’s deputy Rudolf Hess to Scotland on 10/11 May 1941, intensified his suspicions of British secret diplomacy.” (Ian Grey, p320)

### **Hitler invades the USSR**

In view of the western manoeuvres over the previous decade, Stalin was fully justified in being suspicious of rumours and reports emanating from several quarters. All the same, “a directive was issued. It ordered all Soviet units on the fronts of Leningrad, Baltic, Western, Kiev and Odessa military districts to come to immediate readiness for a possible sudden German attack.

“Transmission of the directive was completed by 0030 hours on 22 June 1941. At 0400 hours the German invasion began.” (Ian Grey, p321)

The German forces, with three million troops in 162 divisions, with 3,400 tanks and 7,000 guns, advanced in three groups – the northern group in the direction of Leningrad; the centre group towards Moscow; and the southern group into Ukraine.

Through their perfidious surprise attack, in breach of the non-aggression pact, the Germans had an initial

advantage and managed to capture large swathes of Soviet territory. On 28 June, the Germans captured Minsk, the capital of Belorussia.

On 3 July, 12 days after the German invasion, Stalin broadcast to the nation. This historic speech, devoid of rhetoric, inspired the Soviet people and ignited Soviet patriotism in them. “He spoke as friend and leader, and it was this assurance they had been waiting for.” Soviet people everywhere, especially in the armed forces, as they listened to Stalin’s words, felt an enormous enthusiasm, pride and patriotic fervour. They suddenly felt much stronger.

“Comrades, citizens, brothers and sisters, fighters of our army and navy! I am speaking to you, my friends,” were his opening words. Then, “with a profound instinct for the mood and needs of the people, he described their predicament, and every word burned with his own implacable will to victory”. (Ian Grey, p329)

Not wanting to hide the truth from the people, Stalin told them: “Although the enemy’s finest units of his air force have already been smashed and have gone to their death on the field of battle, the enemy continues to push forward ... The enemy is cruel and implacable ... out to seize our lands ... out to restore the rule of the landlords, to restore tsarism ... to germanise [the people of the Soviet Union], to turn them into slaves of German princes and barons.”

He went on to tell the Soviet people the harsh truth that they were locked in a life-and-death struggle with a treacherous and vile enemy, and that they must be utterly ruthless in beating him; that in case of forced retreat, they must resort to a scorched earth policy, not leave anything behind for use by the enemy; that in areas occupied by the enemy, guerrilla units must be formed, making life unbearable for the enemy, who must be hounded and annihilated.

One of the first and most important directives of the newly-created state defence council was to transfer industries to the east out of reach of the Nazis. “The evacuation of 1,523 industrial units, many of them enormous, including 1,360 major armament plants, was a tremendous undertaking, and in human terms a heroic achievement.” (Ian Grey, p328)

Smolensk fell on 5 August 1941. By the end of that month, German forces had cut Leningrad off from the rest of the USSR. Notwithstanding these setbacks, the morale of the Soviet people remained high. Despite

the best Soviet efforts to prevent its loss, Kiev fell on 16 September 1941 – the most severe setback that the Red Army had suffered.

### **Attack on Moscow**

Hitler now turned his attention to capturing Moscow. In his 12 October 1941 order of the day, he addressed the German troops facing Moscow: “Today is the beginning of the last great decisive battle of this year.”

To counter panic and rumours that Stalin and the politburo had fled the city, the secretary of the central committee broadcast to the nation on 17 October, reassuring the people that Stalin was in Moscow and denouncing rumours that Moscow would be surrendered, making it clear that spies, diversionists and panicmongers were liable to be brought before NKVD tribunals and summarily punished. Stalin’s presence, combined with the fact that the German advance was being slowed down, helped to restore order.

On 6 November, to mark the 24th anniversary of the October Revolution, Stalin addressed the delegates attending a special celebration. According to Ian Grey, Stalin did not address the people frequently, so that “a speech by him was a special event, particularly at this time, when the capital was in danger”. (Ian Grey, *Stalin – Man of History*, p337)

Stalin told the Soviet people that Hitler’s blitzkrieg had already failed, and expressed supreme confidence in the might of the Red Army and the resistance of the Soviet people. He attributed the reverses suffered to the perfidious breach of the Soviet-German pact and the advantage gained by the Nazi forces with their surprise attack, and he called for massive increases in the production of tanks and aircraft.

Another reason for the reverses of the Red Army, said Stalin, was the absence of a second front in Europe against the German-fascist troops, with the result that “Germans are not required to split their forces and fight on two fronts in the west and the east ... our country is carrying on the work of liberation single-handed without any military assistance against the combined forces of the Germans, Finns, Romanians, Italians and Hungarians.” (24th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, speech delivered at the joint celebration meeting of the Moscow Soviet of Working People’s Deputies and Representatives of Moscow party and public organisations, 6 November 1941)

Denouncing Nazi imperialists with angry scorn for their arrogance, the strident ‘Untermensch’ propaganda, and the savagery and bestiality that characterised their treatment of prisoners, he spoke with great emotion in words that aroused Soviet patriotism and the Soviet masses’ burning hatred towards the enemy.

And it is these people without honour or conscience, these people with the morality of animals, who have the effrontery to call for the extermination of the great Russian nation – the nation of Plekhanov and Lenin, of Belinsky and Chernyshevsky, of Pushkin and Tolstoy, of Gorky and Chekhov, of Galinka and Tchaikovsky, of Sechenev and Pavlov, of Repin and Sigrikov, of Suvorov and Kutuzov!

“The German invaders want a war of extermination against the Soviet Union. Very well then! If they want a war of extermination, they shall have it! Our task now ... will be to destroy every German to the very last man who has come to occupy our country. No mercy for the German invaders! Death to the German invaders!”

The following morning (7 November), Stalin reviewed the traditional October Revolution parade on Red Square. The troops he addressed were on their way to the front; the distant thunder of artillery gave his speech a dramatic immediacy:

“The war which you are fighting,” he told them, “is a war of liberation, a just war! May you be inspired in this war by the heroic examples of our great ancestors ... May the victorious banner of the great Lenin inspire you. Death to the German invaders! Long live our glorious country, its freedom, its independence! Under the banner of Lenin – Forward to victory!”

Ian Grey rightly observed that Stalin was “speaking with passion and sincerity ... from the depth of his being ... Russia was his country, and he believed that the harsh years of building and reconstruction and now the savagery of the war would in due course yield victory to the Russian people in the form of justice, freedom and prosperity.” (p338)

The texts of both these speeches were speedily circulated among the troops and civilians, and copies of it were airdropped in occupied territory. “Every Russian read them avidly. They brought a dramatic and extraordinary uplift in the morale of the troops and of the civilian population. The upsurge of national feeling and the veneration of Stalin were inseparable. He had given expression to their love for their native soil and

their hatred of the cruel and arrogant enemy.” (p339)

“The massive setbacks and the immediate threat to Moscow.” observed Grey, “would have unnerved most men, but the impact on Stalin was to strengthen his grim determination to fight. No single factor was more important in holding the nation from disintegrating at this time.” (p335)

In this the most difficult hour in the life of the Soviet Union, “British and American military opinion, with only a few dissenting voices, was that Russian resistance would soon be crushed.” But the imperialists were to be proved wrong. (p339)

The German offensive against Moscow came to a halt early in October 1941. The Soviet Union strengthened its defences against a second German onslaught and brought up reserves. “Within 14 days 100,000 officers and men, 300 tanks, and 2,000 guns were moved into position.” (Ian Grey, p343)

On 13 October 1941, fierce fighting began on all the routes into Moscow; in places, the Germans came to within 15 miles of the city. By the end of October the German advance was slowing to a halt, but on 15 November the Germans launched a new offensive, reaching almost the outskirts of the city. They were not able to advance any further. As soon as the German attack came to a halt, Stalin and his generals Georgy Zhukov and Semyon Timoshenko began planning for a winter counter-offensive.

### **Successful counter-offensive**

Launched on 4-5 December, the winter offensive was spectacularly successful. By mid-January 1942, the Germans had been hurled back from Moscow, in some places as far as 200 miles. Let Ian Grey take up the story of the epic battle:

“The battle of Moscow had been an epic event. Zhukov considered that it was a turning point in the war. It had involved two million men, 2,500 tanks, 1,800 aircraft, and 25,000 guns. Casualties had been horrifying in scale. For the Russians it had ended in victory. They had suffered the full impact of German Blitzkrieg offensive, and, notwithstanding their losses ... they had been able to mount an effective counter-attack. They had begun to destroy the myth of German invincibility ... They had, moreover, relieved Moscow.” (p344)

Meanwhile, after the capture of Kiev in September 1941, the Germans had managed to occupy the whole

of western Ukraine and most of the Crimean peninsula, except for Sevastopol, which lay under siege. After the most savage fighting, despite the heroic resistance put up by Soviet soldiers, Sevastopol fell on 4 July 1942. Rather than surrender, officers and commissars committed suicide. In the words of Ian Grey: “It was a heroic, tragic defeat.” (p347)

### **German turn towards Stalingrad**

The German strategy now was to move eastwards in the direction of Stalingrad. By the end of July 1942, the Nazis had captured the whole of the Donbass, accounting for 60 percent of Soviet coal production and the centre of the southern industrial region.

In the midst of exhortations to officers and men to fight to the death, Stalin’s order of the day ‘Soviet soldiers! Not a step back!’ made a deep impact. The order was read out to the troops on all fronts.

A new Stalingrad front was created on 12 July 1942. Just at this time, when the fate of the USSR hung in the balance, Winston Churchill arrived in Moscow personally to break the news that there would be no second front in 1942. It was nothing short of a stab in the back, leaving the Soviet Union to confront the might of Nazi Germany all by herself.

Stalin taunted Churchill by accusing the British of cowardice and being afraid to fight the Germans. More importantly, the British were pursuing their prewar policy of letting the Germans and the Soviets fight each other to exhaustion and enjoying the spectacle from the sidelines.

The German advance continued, but more slowly owing to stiff Soviet resistance. However, by 14 August 1942 the German forces were advancing on Stalingrad from three directions – south, north-west and north.

On 23 August 1942, the Germans began the final stage of their attack on Stalingrad.

By this time, while the Soviet armament supplies had improved considerably, the Germans were suffering from shortages, and their ranks were being decimated in fierce fighting.

“Stalin followed the battle closely. He had daily reports from Zhukov and other commanders at the front.

“On the evening of 13 September 1942, Stalin met Zhukov and Vasilevsky. Shaking hands with them on their arrival in his office, Stalin exclaimed angrily: ‘While hundreds of thousands of our Soviet people are giving

their lives in the struggle against fascism, Churchill is bargaining over a score of Hurricanes. And these Hurricanes of his are junk – our pilots don't like them.” (Ian Grey, p358)

In early November 1942, the Germans on the Soviet-German front had 266 divisions with a total strength of 6.2 million men, more than 70,000 guns and mine throwers, 6,600 tanks and assault weapons, 3,500 combat aircraft and 194 warships. (The memoirs of Marshal Zhukov, 1969, p396)

The USSR had by this time a total strength of 6.1 million men, 72,500 guns and mortars, 6,014 tanks and 3,008 combat aircraft. The supreme command had at its disposal 25 divisions, 13 armoured corps, and seven independent rifle and armoured brigades.

Numerically, the forces confronting each other were almost equal.

To prepare for the Soviet counter-offensive a total of 27,000 vehicles were employed to transport troops and freight; the railways carried 1,300 goods wagons daily. Troops and freight for the Stalingrad front were carried in the exceptionally difficult conditions of the autumn freezing of the Volga. Between 1 and 19 November, 160,000 men, 10,000 horses, 430 tanks, 600 artillery pieces, 14,000 vehicles and nearly 7,000 tons of armaments were ferried across the Volga. (Zhukov, p402)

For the Soviet counter-offensive, named Operation Uranus, which began on 19 November 1942, the Soviet Union had concentrated in the Stalingrad-Don area a total of a million men, supported by 13,500 guns and mortars, more than 300 rocket batteries and 1,100 aircraft.

“It was a brilliant feat of planning and organisation, carried out by Zhukov and Vasilevsky, under the active direction of Stalin; it was crowned by a resounding victory. This troop concentration had been completed in the course of just 60 days.” (Ian Grey, p358)

Stalin understood that without air superiority the war could not be won. He therefore “paid due heed to air support for ground operations”. (Zhukov, p404)

“Stalin maintained personal control over the organisation and reserves of the air force ... Stavka's representative, overseeing ... operations, made personal report to Stalin daily.” Stalin carefully built up the air reserves. Nikitin, a deputy commander in chief of the air force, wrote that Stalin kept a check on aircraft

production “daily noting in his own notebook” the deliveries of new planes. “He personally allocated equipment to air forces, attaching the greatest importance to the air support for the Stalingrad offensive.” (Ian Grey, pp358-9)

Soviet industry had, however, achieved phenomenal results since the great evacuation of the autumn and winter of 1941-42, bringing a dramatic improvement in the equipment of the Red Army – not merely in terms of quantity but also in quality. As a result, the Soviet forces now had the upper hand.

“Stalin took a direct interest in the development of weapons, and indeed his approval was needed before any prototype or major change went into production. The improved T-34 medium tank and the IS heavy tank were, the Russians claimed, the most effective tanks in the war, and most German officers admitted their superiority.

“The Russian artillery, and especially the rocket artillery, had a devastating fire power. By 1943, Russian rifles and guns had a more rapid rate of fire and greater endurance. The leading aircraft designers, Tupolev, Yakovlev and Lavochkin, who reported directly to Stalin on their work, produced more effective planes, and gradually he had built up under his control a powerful air force.” (Ian Grey, p365)

By 12 November, having finalised the details of the Stalingrad front operational plans, Vasilevsky and Zhukov telephoned Stalin to say that they needed to report personally in relation to the pending offensive. “We saw Stalin next morning. He was in a cheerful mood, he asked us to detail the state of affairs at Stalingrad and the progress being made in preparations for the counter-offensive ...

“Stalin listened attentively. By the way he smoked his pipe, smoothed his moustaches, and never intervened even once, we could see that he was pleased.” (Zhukov, p405-6)

The Soviet counter-offensive was launched on 19 November. By 25 November, Vatutin, Rokossovsky and Yeremenko's forces, meeting near Kalach, had successfully encircled the German Sixth Army and a corps of the Fourth Panzer Army.

Soviet partisans operating in the enemy rear did all in their power to obstruct the movement of German troops. “Braving Nazi terror and in spite of all the precautions, our gallant patriots derailed dozens of German troop trains.” (Zhukov, p416)

In his 28 December 1942 report to the supreme command, NF Vatutin, commander of the south-western front, covering the progress of the offensive, described the situation as follows:

“All confronting forces, some 17 divisions, have been wiped out and stocks captured. We have taken more than 60,000 prisoners, about the same number have been killed. The painful remnants of these forces are hardly offering any resistance, except for a few pockets.” (Zhukov, p417)

The successful blow struck by the troops of the south-western and Stalingrad fronts on the Kotelnikovo and Morzovsk directions sealed the fate of Paulus’s encircled troops in Stalingrad.

### **Finishing the job**

In late December 1942, the state defence committee met to discuss the question of finishing off the Nazi troops trapped in Stalingrad as soon as possible, and thus release the two fronts engaged there for the quicker destruction of Nazi forces that were retreating from the Caucasus and the south.

“Stalin kept on hurrying the front commanders.”

At the meeting, Stalin suggested: “Only one man should direct operations to destroy the encircled enemy grouping. The fact that there are two front commanders is interfering with this.”

Zhukov noted: “This view was seconded by the committee members present.

“Who gets the mission?” Stalin asked.

“Somebody suggested K K Rokossovsky for the job.

“Why don’t you say anything?”, Stalin turned to me.

“I think both commanders are worthy’, I said. ‘True, A I Yeremenko will feel hurt if we put the forces of the Stalingrad Front under K K Rokossovsky.’

“It is not the time for feeling hurt,’ Stalin retorted curtly. Then he ordered, ‘Call A I Yeremenko and notify him of the state defence committee decision.’

So Zhukov phoned Yeremenko and told him that the committee had decided to give Rokossovsky the job of snuffing out the enemy’s Stalingrad grouping. (Zhukov, p420)

In January 1943, the position of the trapped German forces was catastrophic. “They had no prospect of relief, stocks had run out, troops were on starvation rations, hospitals were packed, the death rate from injury and disease was steep. The end was in sight.

“To avoid bloodshed, the supreme command ordered the Don Front command to present the Sixth Army with a surrender ultimatum on generally accepted terms. Despite the inescapable catastrophe, the Nazi command ordered its troops to reject the ultimatum and to fight to the last ditch, meanwhile holding out promises of relief that it never meant to fulfil.” (Zhukov, p422)

On 22 January, after the partial success of its 10 January offensive, the Soviet front launched a fresh offensive. This is how an intelligence officer of Paulus’s Sixth Army described the Soviet-compelled German retreat in his reminiscences:

“We were forced back along the entire front ... This, true, was more in the nature of a flight ... of downright panic in places ... The road of retreat was strewn with corpses, which blizzards, seemingly out of compassion, soon blanketed with snow ... Now we are retreating without order.”

And further: “Out-racing death which easily caught up to pluck out whole batches of victims, the army rolled back on to a small scrap of land that was an inferno.” (Joachim Wieder, Catastrophe on the Volga, 1965, pp95-100)

“The southern group of Germans was snuffed out on 31 January, its remnants with General Field-Marshal Paulus, commander of the Sixth Army at their head surrendering. The remnants of the northern group capitulated on 2 February. The great battle on the Volga, where the biggest-ever group of troops of Nazi Germany and its satellites met with a disastrous end, was now over.” (Zhukov, p423)

The battle of Stalingrad was exceptionally fierce. Between 19 November 1942 and 2 February 1943, a total of 32 divisions and 3 brigades were wiped out, while another 16 divisions lost between half and three-quarters of their number.

Total German losses in the Volga-Don-Stalingrad area ran into some 1.5 million men, 3,500 tanks and assault weapons, 12,000 guns and mortars and 3,000 aircraft, and great amounts of other equipment. “This crippling toll had a telling effect on the overall strategic situation, shaking Nazi Germany’s entire war machine to its foundations.” (Zhukov, p423)

Looking at the causes of the German debacle and the epoch-making victory of the Red Army, Zhukov enumerated the following:

German underestimation of the forces and



potentialities of the Soviet Union, the indomitable spirit of the people, hand in hand with an overestimation by the Nazis of their own forces and capabilities.

Skilful utilisation of the surprise factor, correct selection of the directions of the main effort, and accurate detection of the weak points in the German defences.

Correct determination of the manpower and materiel requirements for the quickest possible breakthrough of the tactical defences, the full-scale exploitation of an operative breakthrough with the object of enveloping the enemy main grouping.

The armour, mechanised forces, and aviation's complete domination of the air, which played a decisive role in swiftly enveloping and routing the enemy.

The clarity of purpose, firmness and foresight which characterised the Red Army.

The party and political work conducted by the military councils, political bodies, party and YCL organisations and commanders, "who fostered in the soldiers confidence and bravery, and encouraged mass heroism on the battlefield, thus contributing to the defeat of the Nazi army".

"The strength and might of the Soviet people, a people nurtured by Lenin's party, a people whom no oppressor will ever bring to their knees."

We would also add that Josef Stalin played an exceptionally crucial and brilliant role in this victory, one which no other single person could have done at the time.

### **Role of Stalin**

In his memoirs, written after the death of Stalin, Zhukov acknowledged Stalin's role in the victory:

"Today, after Stalin's death, the idea is current that he never heeded advice and decided questions of military policy all by himself. I can't agree with it. When he realised that the person reporting knew what he was talking about, he would listen, and I know cases when he reconsidered his own opinions and decisions. This was the case in many operations." (Zhukov, p464; Ian Grey, p368)

These words, coming from such an authoritative person as Zhukov, who had worked so closely with Stalin during the course of the war, demolish the lies propagated by the renegade Nikita Khrushchev, and by the bourgeois scribblers who pass for historians in the centres of

imperialism.

Ian Grey, one of the very few bourgeois historians who have shown some objectivity, had this to say on Stalin's role and his style of functioning:

"According to Zhukov and Vasilevsky, Stalin was always prepared to listen to views contrary to his own, provided they were based on facts and presented lucidly ... Indeed, he went so far as to declare that front commanders should themselves decide the timing of their counteroffensives." But of course, even Grey could not resist the temptation of adding: "But the habit of command was deeply implanted and he always took control." (p368)

### **Significance of the victory**

The Soviet victory at Stalingrad turned the tide of the war in favour of the Soviet Union. With this victory, the Soviet armed forces began driving the Nazi hordes out of Soviet soil.

This was a victory not only for the Red Army, the Red Air Force and the Red Navy, but for the entire Soviet people, who had laboured day and night to provide the army with the wherewithal successfully to rout the enemy.

"Faithful sons of Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Baltic republics, Kazakhstan and central Asian republics earned deathless fame by their staunchness and mass heroism." (Zhukov, p424)

With the Soviet victory at Stalingrad, even Nazi officers and generals, as well as German people generally, began to show more openly their aversion to Hitler and the entire Nazi political leadership as the victories promised by Hitler evaporated in the catastrophe in the Don and the Volga.

According to Lt General Westphal, the Soviet victory at Stalingrad "came as a deep shock to both the German nation, and their army. Never before in all of Germany's history had there been so fearful an end of so large a force." (Zhukov, p424)

With the rout of the armies of Germany and her fascist allies, Germany's influence on her allies declined precipitously; discord and friction set in, along with loss of faith in Hitler's leadership and a desire to back out of the war in which he had embroiled them.

Moreover, the Soviet victory had a very sobering effect on the 'neutrals' and those who were still pursuing a wait-and-see policy, compelling them to acknowledge

the vast might of the USSR and the inevitable defeat of Hitlerite Germany.

The Soviet victory brought joy to people throughout the world.

After the victory at Stalingrad, Marshall Zhukov was decorated with the Order of Suvorov (first class).

Zhukov regarded this decoration “not only as a great personal honour, but also as a summons to bring nearer the hour of the complete rout of the enemy, the hour of full and final victory”. (p425)

Five other Soviet generals, including K K Rokossov-sky, were also awarded the Order of Suvorov following the victory at Stalingrad.

On the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army at the battle of Stalingrad, we bow our heads to the heroic Soviet soldiers and civilians who sacrificed so much to achieve this victory and thus saved humanity from the clutches of fascism.

It is especially important to honour the heroes of Stalingrad today, as the neo-Nazi warmongering Nato alliance is waging a war against Russia with the same aims that the fascists of yore, the Hitlerites, had against the USSR – ie, to dismember and subjugate it.

Glory to the heroes of Stalingrad!

## **Faced with the Euro-Atlantic warmongers of a potentially exterminating third world war: Build a new Communist International, relaunch the Global Anti-Imperialist Front and give impetus to the struggles of the international working class!**

**Fadi Kassem** |

Pole of Communist Revival in France (PRCF);

**Georges Gastaud** |

Initiative Communiste (IC), France;

**Boris Differ** |

Pole of Communist Revival in France (PRCF)

Confronted with the continental conflict fomented by the EU- NATO in Ukraine (the 2014 Euro-Maidan coup d'état instigated by the United States, which did not hesitate to support the Ukrainian Nazis of Pravy Sektor, Aïdar and Azov for this; cynically claimed torpedoing of the Minsk Agreements by A. Merkel and F. Hollande ...), as well as the anti-Chinese provocations of the US Navy in the Indo-Pacific area, the parties which, in France and throughout the world, claim to be communist and/or anti-imperialist have basically had a choice between three types of positioning since 24 February 2022:

- either, as Fabien Roussel ventured in the name of the P “C”F, linked to the Party of the European Left, demonise Russia and China and vote in Parliament (on 29.11.2022) for Macron’s arms deliveries to the Ukrainian regime nostalgic for Hitler’s Stépan Bandera;

- or take refuge in an uncompromising ni-ni position (“neither NATO, nor Russia!”) and evade the obligation incumbent on all serious anti-imperialists, and a fortiori on all communists, to give priority to fighting the imperialism of their own country (“the main enemy is in your country”, as the heroic German socialist Karl Liebknecht said in August 1914);

- or, as the PRCF did from the outset, denounce the EU-NATO Axis as the main enemy of the peoples and of world peace. In fact, the real aim of the alliance between the EU, NATO and the Ukrainian ultra-right in power is in no way to “restore the unity of Ukraine”, but to preserve, at the cost of a world war with a nuclear component if necessary, the shaky global hegemony of the dollar and the US Army in the face of the great emerging countries of China, Russia, India, Brazil and South Africa.

Faced with an ultra-predatory and “unilateralist” Euro-Atlanticist logic which is strangling the world on every level (economic, military, environmental, even linguistic and cultural), communists and all other consistent anti-imperialists must support any effort to loosen the deadly, indeed frankly fascist and exterminist, planetary stranglehold imposed on humanity by the Euro-Atlantic Axis. Indeed, to claim to be able to bring down all the capitalist or partially capitalist countries on the planet at once, indiscriminately and in the same way, is to ignore the fact that, as Mao showed, there are “principal

contradictions” and “secondary contradictions”, or, as Lenin wrote, that

“A more powerful enemy can only be defeated at the cost of an extreme tension of forces and on the express condition that the slightest “crack” between enemies is used in the most meticulous, careful, circumspect and intelligent way, the slightest opposition of interests between the bourgeoisies of the different countries, between the different groups or categories of the bourgeoisie within each country, as well as the possibility of securing a numerically strong ally, even if it were a temporary, shaky, conditional, unsound and insecure ally. Anyone who has not understood this truth has understood nothing of Marxism, or of contemporary scientific socialism in general ... ”,

... it is to commit a fatal strategic error leading, on the one hand, to the isolation of proletarian forces and, on the other, to the unification against them of all the non-proletarian forces on the planet. In the final analysis, this fails to grasp the ABCs of any politico-military strategy: isolate the main enemy in order to bring it down first, while at the same time uniting as many forces as possible around the proletariat, the spearhead of any anti-imperialist struggle fought to the end. Those who still do not understand this should reread, not only Lenin (“Left-Wing” Communism: an Infantile Disorder), not only George Dimitrov (“Report to the 7th Congress of the Communist International”), but also Pierre Corneille’s tragedy *Horace*: the Roman warrior Horace, forced to face three Albanian warriors alone, ends up eliminating all three by fighting them, not all together at the same time, but by dividing them up and killing them one after the other in different places!

This clear priority commitment to opposing the EU-NATO axis in no way implies idealising V. Putin’s regime. This bourgeois regime, which grew out of the anti-Soviet counter-revolution led by Gorbachev and Yeltsin in the 1980s and 90s, carved up the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the name of a supposed “great reconciliation” between the future prosperous “post-communist” Russia and the “gentle” West. As if the implosion of the European socialist camp were likely to change (if not aggravate!) the hyper-predatory nature of the Washington-led Euro-Atlantic empire and the despotic, militaristic EU led by resurgent German imperialism!

This is why, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary

of Stalingrad which it organised on 4 February 2023 in defiance of the Ukrainian fascists swarming Paris, the PRCF invited a Russian Communist MP, comrade Vladimir Bessonov, to address the French directly. Although he unequivocally supports Russia’s patriotic effort to break the agonising political, military and commercial encirclement by the Atlantic forces which threatens it from the Baltic to the Far East via the Black Sea, Bessonov is nonetheless a determined political opponent of the bourgeois rulers who periodically humiliate communists the world over by veiling Lenin’s mausoleum every 9 May on the anniversary of Victory. Quite simply, communists everywhere must make a clear distinction, while intelligently articulating them, between politico-ideological class solidarity with the other workers’ parties of the world (from Korea to Venezuela, via India and Greece), and the “military support” owed to any state, and to any political force, including patriotic-bourgeois, daring to defy the very “globalitarian” Euro-Atlantic Empire in the making.

This denunciation of the EU-NATO as the main enemy of the peoples of the world and of world peace is also a patriotic duty towards our country, France, which is still capitalist and imperialist, but still partly heir to the secular-democratic achievements of Robespierre’s Jacobin Revolution and the social advances bequeathed by the Communist ministers of 1945, and which is being destroyed by the forced march of the European oligarchies towards the anti-social, fascist and anti-national “European federal state” sought by the Washington-Brussels-Berlin Axis and accepted by French imperialism, which is all the more aggressive and vassalized because it is in rapid decline from the Middle East to West Africa.

In this spirit of anti-imperialist unity, the PRCF participates, among other forums, in the important Caracas Anti-Imperialist Platform. It nonetheless supports the CP of Venezuela and all other Marxist parties, expressing the need for Leninist forces specifically at the service of the proletariat to play their inalienable role. As we can see, “military” support for the World Anti-Imperialist Front which is being reconstituted—even if it is partly non-proletarian, and therefore somewhat inconsistent and zigzagging—in no way prevents the Communist parties from holding discussions with all the sister parties of the world which wish to maintain egalitarian relations

with each other, excluding any temptation to interfere or excommunicate. This unreserved support for the broadest anti-imperialist front goes dialectically hand in hand with the need for the Communists to win the leading role (not through arrogant pronouncements but through the practical demonstration of the anti-imperialist dynamism of Communist militants) in the world battle against imperialism and hegemonism. Not out of a spirit of domination, but because capitalism is objectively the fertile womb denounced by Brecht, from which periodically emerges the foul beast of fascism and exterminism.

Without confusing them, without dissolving the International Communist Movement (ICM) into the emerging World Anti-Imperialist Front, as the advocates of a Fifth International without a defined class identity are wrongly urging us to do; without, on the other hand, reducing the Anti-Imperialist Front to a handful of Communist Parties cultivating a purist *entresoi* (\*phenomenon sticking to its own little society—Ed.) which excludes from the anti-imperialist and anti-exterminist struggle the billions of human beings, and in particular the members of the world's popular youth, who want to live and live better but who have not yet been won over to Marxism; we must articulate the reconstruction of the International Communist Movement (ICM) with the reconstruction of the ICM (and why not, when the time comes, the indispensable new Communist International?) on a strictly Marxist and proletarian basis, to the building of the broadest anti-imperialist front. This in no way prevents us from campaigning so that the communists win, or rather, so that they deserve to win through their anti-imperialist commitment and their ability to federate, a role of impetus and political vanguard in what Yuri Andropov once called the "Front for Life" or the "Front of Reason".

This, moreover, was the highly dialectical and mobilising lesson of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, at equal distance from the sectarianism of some and the unbridled opportunism of others. For the working class, whose struggles are now resuming everywhere (India, France, Great Britain, the United States), is alone in being able to bring to a successful conclusion—the world triumph of socialism on the road to communism—a consistent struggle to bring down imperialism without return and prevent the defeat of one imperialism from serving only to promote

the rival imperialism in the end.

## **The political stance of the Communist Party of Greece ... a communist stance?**

### **Chilean Communist Party (Proletarian Action)**

#### **Part 1: Critical approach to the positions of the CPG**

- Reasons for a response to the Communist Party of Greece (CPG)
- Greece must leave NATO! Or should not it?
- The CPG's subterfuge to avoid debate
- No support for capitalists?
- Reactionary Venezuela?
- The member organisations of the Platform "ignore or deny" that the current mode of production in the world is capitalist

#### **Part 1: Critical approach to the positions of the CPG**

#### **Reasons for a response to the Communist Party of Greece (CPG)**

The international relations section of the Communist Party of Greece (CPG) published on April 1, 2023 an "overwhelming" (read vehement) criticism of the World Anti-Imperialist Platform (WAP) on the party's website.

We have carefully read the text and, despite its inappropriate tone, we have decided to answer it because we consider fundamental an honest and fraternal debate among communists around the world on national and international political issues, even if there are divergences of opinion even on essential aspects, so that, as a synthesis of a debate based on the scientific understanding of reality and far from dogmatism and chimeras, the most correct ideas may prevail, capable of coordinating and adequately orienting the struggle of the working class in the countries and in the international arena to achieve the defeat of imperialism, the seizure of political power by the working class and its allies



and, finally, the socialist revolution. Today in particular, given the very special circumstances in human society (finance capital is about to plunge all humanity into a war without parallel in history) an accurate, precise, pragmatic and genuinely revolutionary understanding is required.

In the following we will develop a response to the criticisms of the World Anti-Imperialist Platform expressed by the CPG, avoiding adopting a contemptuous, aggressive and, in our opinion, even at times arrogant tone, similar to that of the aforementioned text, because we believe that the debate among communists should be based on ethical principles such as fraternity, humility, respect and loyalty and always safeguarding the fundamental interests of the national and international working class and the great oppressed and exploited masses who share their destiny and are their natural allies (the democratic petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry, the original peoples, the intelligentsia). Neither aggressiveness nor arrogance should determine the opinions of communists, but only the quality and clarity of the arguments.

Right ideas must prevail, wrong ideas must be inexorably abandoned. There must be no dogmatic barriers, no chimeras, no personal pride to impede the abandonment of wrong ideas.

This must be the guiding principle of every communist. And it is under this criterion that we will analyze the text of the CPG and its pyramid theory.

### **Greece must leave NATO! Or should not it?**

We begin our response to the CPG letter with a question that is also a proposal.

As everyone can verify without much effort, one of the central political pillars of the World Anti-Imperialist Platform, of which the Chilean Communist Party (Proletarian Action) is part, is the struggle against NATO, and the organizations that compose it, based in NATO member countries, are there fighting for the exit of their country from this criminal and warmongering organization. In order not to follow the same path as the CPG, that is, direct confrontation with organizations that do not share its postulates, we have decided to seek common ground on which to converge, something that communists internationally urgently need at this time. We consider that opposition to NATO could be a unifying element because we have found demands such

as the following:

*“Today everything points to the need to struggle for the overthrow of capitalist barbarism, which condemns workers to class exploitation, social injustice, and imperialist wars. The KKE, which over the years has striven and continues to strive with all its might to “turn the wheel of history”, is at the forefront of the development of the anti-imperialist and anti-war movement, against the US–NATO military bases, for the disengagement from imperialist plans and alliances such as NATO and the EU. Today, against the backdrop of the sharpening of inter-imperialist contradictions, this popular movement must become more widespread, to embrace more workers’–people’s forces, to be replete with the contemporary content of the anti-imperialist struggle. For our country, disengagement from NATO and any imperialist union is a key priority for the workers’ and people’s movement, and, as history has shown, it can be irreversible and in favour of the interests of the people with the strong guarantee of workers’ power.*

#### **All efforts must be directed towards this goal!**

- *US–NATO bases must be immediately closed down!*
- *No Greek soldiers and military officers outside of the country’s borders. All Greek armed forces participating in imperialist missions abroad must return home!*
- *No participation of Greece in imperialist plans!*
- *Disengagement from the imperialist NATO–EU unions, with our people masters in their own land!”<sup>34)</sup>*

We believe these are correct ideas. Similar criticisms of NATO can also be found in many other articles on the CPG website, whose content and corresponding demands seem to us to be broadly correct.

However, we were very surprised not to find a single statement, declaration or demand from the CPG calling for Greece’s exit from NATO. It seems to us a contradiction that the CPG is intensively engaged in criticising NATO, but without calling for Greece’s withdrawal from it. The closest call for a withdrawal from NATO that can be found on the CPG’s website is

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34) Communist Party of Greece (CPG), “Organized popular struggle against the involvement in imperialist plans, for disengagement from NATO and the EU”, in: <https://inter.kke.gr/en/articles/Organized-popular-struggle-against-the-involvement-in-imperialist-plans-for-disengagement-from-NATO-and-the-EU/>



the following:

*“It projects the goal of conflict and rupture with NATO and the EU as elements of the struggle to overthrow the power of capital in order to achieve workers’ power, which is a prerequisite for the liberation of the country from any imperialist alliance, and in favor of the people. Additionally, it is struggling to have the NATO bases removed from Greece, to prevent any attempt to change the borders, condemns the deployment of any Greek or foreign army using its territory as starting point. It struggles based on the principles of Proletarian Internationalism for international solidarity and friendship of the peoples.”<sup>35)</sup>*

NATO military bases, especially American ones, must leave Greece, Europe and the world! We agree with the CPG on this basic demand. But demanding a conflict and a break with NATO is not the same as demanding that Greece must leave NATO. What does the CPG mean by “conflict and a rupture with NATO”: Greece’s formal and official withdrawal from NATO, a withdrawal from NATO’s military structure without leaving it<sup>36)</sup>, a disagreement or a dispute with it? A military confrontation? Why not explicitly demand that Greece should leave NATO?

It is clear that if Greece were to leave NATO, its military bases would have to do the same on Greek territory, since any agreement with NATO ends as soon as a country ceases to be a member.

The Greek struggle against NATO can therefore be summed up in a single phrase: Greece out of NATO, which inevitably means NATO’s withdrawal from Greece. And doing so is simple. Article 13 of the NATO treaty states:

*“After the Treaty has been in force for twenty years, any Party may cease to be a Party one year after its notice of denunciation has been given to the Government of the United States of America, which will inform the*

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35) Communist Party of Greece (CPG), “Declaration of the Central Committee on the 100th anniversary of the KKE”, in :<https://inter.kke.gr/en/articles/DECLARATION-OF-THE-CENTRAL-COMMITTEE-ON-THE-100TH-ANNIVERSARY-OF-THE-KKE/>

36) Since NATO was founded on 4 April 1949, no country has withdrawn from NATO. However, there have been three cases of a country withdrawing from NATO’s military structure: France under Charles de Gaulle in 1966, Spain from 1986 to 1999 and Greece from 1974 to 1981.

*Governments of the other Parties of the deposit of each notice of denunciation.”<sup>37)</sup>*

Greece, with its entry into NATO in 1952, has more than fulfilled the 20 years required for its exit.

Therefore, if the CPG is consistent and sincere in its criticism of this organisation, we would like to make a proposal to it, despite our political and ideological differences: the joint drafting of a declaration calling for the exit of Greece from NATO, together with a joint action to this purpose in Athens (for example), to promote the struggle within the working class and the great oppressed and exploited masses of Greece for the definitive withdrawal of the country from the criminal warmongering organisation. We are ready to collaborate in this activity, to spread it and to participate in it and to come from other latitudes to support it. We also want to invite the members of the CPG and SolidNet to support our activities of this kind.

A union of communist forces in this direction will strongly support the development of the communist movement in Europe and the world.

Our proposal is open.

### **The CPG’s subterfuge to avoid debate**

It is true that, despite the similarities we have just pointed out, there are not inconsiderable differences between the Platform’s postulates and those disseminated by the CPG and its SolidNet. But instead of pursuing a debate based on arguments, the CPG sidesteps it with judgements:

*“The outbreak of the imperialist war in Ukraine has sharpened the contradictions within the international communist movement around serious ideological-political issues that have been plaguing it for years and express the opportunist influence in its ranks. Naturally, the focus was on the stance towards the imperialist character of the war that is being waged between the USA-NATO-EU and capitalist Russia on the territory of Ukraine, the stance towards the bourgeoisie and its political representatives such as social democracy, the problematic analyses of the imperialist system and the*

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37) The North Atlantic Treaty (NATO), “The North Atlantic Treaty Washington D.C. - 4 April 1949”, in: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm?selectedLocale=en)

*position of China and Russia, and other issues, more deeply connected with the question of the erroneous strategy of stages towards socialism, of support for and participation in bourgeois governments.”*

In general, we agree with the political assertions in the quote, as they are generic assertions. However, we would like to highlight the subtle argumentative trickery used in it:

The seemingly illuminating phrase: “and express the opportunist influence in its ranks” is in reality a qualifier that assumes that any opinion that does not coincide with the CPG’s views makes its spokesmen opportunists. Instead of looking for common denominators, the CPG begins by parting the waters between communists as Moses parted the Red Sea. Two supposedly inexorably divided flanks oppose each other ideologically and are unable to find unity because the “other” flank would be composed of “opportunists”, and with opportunism, on which we agree with the CPG, there is no possibility of dialogue.

Against this background, we point out that, although we differ from the CPG’s positions in many politically and ideologically relevant respects, we firmly and categorically reject the label of “opportunists”.

Given the fact that the CPG’s “critique” abounds in subjective expressions, i.e. judgements that substitute for arguments, we find it regrettably necessary to address them. Take, for example, the following long excerpt, which is full of judgements but devoid of political or ideological argumentation:

*“Under these circumstances, on the eve of the 22nd International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties (IMCWP) that was held in Havana last October, a new international organization called the “World Anti-Imperialist Platform” (WAP) emerged in Paris, which has already organized a series of activities in Belgrade, Athens and recently in Caracas, hosted by the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV). The WAP’s event in Venezuela coincided with the anti-popular attack launched by the social democratic government of PSUV on the working class and popular strata of Venezuela, at a time when it has reached agreements with the right-wing opposition and the USA, intensifying the anti-communist attacks and subversive actions against the CP of Venezuela.*

*It is important to look at which forces make it up as well*

*as the main problematic positions of the WAP.*

### **A peculiar amalgam of political forces**

*An amalgam of political forces is involved in the activities of the WAP, where social democratic forces, such as the aforementioned PSUV and a South Korean organization (People’s Democracy Party) that has come out of the blue, play the main role, together with some Communist and Workers’ parties, such as the Hungarian Workers’ Party, the Communist Party (Italy), the New Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the Russian Communist Workers’ Party (RCWP), the Lebanese Communist Party, the Maoist Communist Party of Great Britain (M-L), the Pole of Communist Revival in France, etc.*

*Moreover, as the Communist Party of Mexico<sup>1</sup> denounced, even nationalist, racist and reactionary political forces participated in the events in Caracas. Such were, for example, the nationalist Spanish organization “Vanguardia Española” (Spanish Vanguard), whose roots go back to the nationalist philosopher Gustavo Bueno, who was an active Phalangist fighter and supporter of the fascist dictator Franco in the 1950s. The “Vanguardia Venezolana” (Venezuelan Vanguard) is of a similar ilk.*

*Two unknown organizations from Greece participate in the WAP, lacking of mass action and social basis: the “Collective of Struggle for the Revolutionary Unification of Humanity” (D. Patelis) and the “Platform for Independence” (V. Gonatas), which lately have been marked by an intensification of anti-KKE sentiments, often choosing the slippery slope of provocative attacks via the Internet.”*

A lot of letters, but little content. At least what is said in the first part of the quote is true. Shortly before these words were written, another Platform meeting had been held in South Korea.

But then a series of disqualifications are piled on, substituting political and ideological arguments and showing, in our opinion, a tendency to arrogance and to replace arguments with relativisations and qualifiers, but also ignorance about the World Anti-Imperialist Platform, which is spoken of with such “authority”. It is not our intention to go into details about the internal organisation of the Platform. However, it is appropriate to point out that participation in international meetings organised by the Platform is not synonymous with membership. The CPG can also participate and

contribute its ideas without becoming a member.

We would also like to comment briefly on the term “small organisations”. Regardless of whether or not it is correct in relation to the various organisations that make up the Platform, it seems to us a contradiction to use it to disqualify organisations that do not share the ideas of the CPG, but to base one’s own argumentation on equally small organisations, such as the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV)<sup>38)</sup> and the Communist Party of Mexico (PCM) (which is practically only a name). We are of the opinion that these organisations should not be disqualified because of their size, but, like any political organisation, should be evaluated according to the correctness of their arguments.

In the section “Brief critique of basic positions of the WAP”, the CPG raises the question of what imperialism is and denounces the opportunist misuse of the concept also by representatives of the bourgeois classes. We agree with this view and the considerations the CPG draws from it in the first paragraph.

Subsequently, the CPG quotes comrade Lenin:

*“Lenin has substantiated the basic features of imperialism: (1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; (2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this “finance capital,” of a financial oligarchy; (3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; (4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves and (5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed.”*

And it concludes as follows:

*“As we can see, the scientific Leninist approach for imperialism is a far cry from the common use of imperialism as an aggressive foreign policy or the identification with a single state, albeit being the most powerful one, as the WAP, among others, argues.”*

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38) In the PCV, the rank and file openly oppose its leadership. Due to the PCV’s misguided positions towards the Venezuelan government, it has also lost a not insignificant number of members. Members who have left the PCV have joined the PSUV or other organisations that support the Bolivarian government.

*Here we see another variant of the “argumentative subterfuge” used by the CPG: the CPG arbitrarily attributes to the members of the World Anti-Imperialist Platform, ideas that have not been said anywhere and that cannot be implicitly deduced from any text, and then puts forward a “scientific comparison” of such assumptions with the statements of Comrade Lenin.*

In the WAP we do not understand “imperialism as aggressive foreign policy”, but the other way around, that aggressive foreign policy is a consequence of the imperialist character of a country (or of an organization, such as NATO). By inverting the argumentation of the adversary in this way, without having cited him, it is easy to “win” any debate.

What if we were to do the same? We could, for example, ingeniously suppose that the CPG says that the US, NATO and the EU are less “evil” and less aggressive than Russia and China, and that, according to this party, the latter two would be the main enemies. And then, instead of refuting the ideas that the CPG actually holds, refute this invention of ours.

It is quite difficult to refute ideas that are based on the distortion of our own. It is impossible to know whether the CPG deliberately misrepresents the ideas of those who oppose its claims, or whether this is the result of a lack of reading comprehension, or both. The entire section entitled “National sovereignty, regional unions, new global financial architecture or socialism?” is an almost unbelievable accumulation of supposed ideas that we, as WAP, would advocate. Not a single one of these assumptions is true, unfortunately, and those that are true are inaccurate or exaggerated:

- *It is absolutely NOT true that we in the WAP have abandoned the struggle for socialism. As CP(PA) we not only fight unfailingly for socialism, but for communism, a free society, with a very high scientific and technological development, in which the state has vanished given the fact that class contradictions have been definitively overcome.*
- *It is NOT true that, according to the members of the WAP, “all problems arise from foreign interference, from the imposition of the will of the imperialist powers, mainly the USA, in all countries”. We postulate that the central problems (the economic and political dependence of the countries under the hegemony of imperialism, the plunder of the sources of raw materials, the diversion of part*

*of the added value produced in the dependent countries to the imperialist centres, wars, coups d'état and destabilisations, etc.) are the result of imperialist hegemony. Coups d'état and political destabilisations of the countries that do not want to submit to imperialist hegemony, indebtedness, militarism, poverty and misery, forced migrations, destruction of the ecosystem, etc. of societies are the consequences of imperialism precisely because it is able to exercise international hegemony and in fact does exercise it. But to all this must be added the internal contradictions resulting from the national class struggle.*

- *And what does it mean that in "practice" the WAP seeks "to forge alliances in the bosom of the so-called national bourgeoisie"? Alliances between the national petty bourgeoisie and the big bourgeoisie? Alliances between the working class and the national petty bourgeoisie? Alliances between the working class and the national big bourgeoisie? Alliances between the national bourgeoisie of one country and the national bourgeoisie of another? The concept is not clear.*
- *And so the CPG deduces, from the mountain of confusion that it has about the postulates of the Platform, that we would be the ones with "confusion over imperialism, an underestimate of the international character of the era of monopoly capitalism, which is reflected in every capitalist state with the sharpening of the basic contradiction between capital and labour and the strengthening of the tendency of the absolute and relative deterioration of the position of the working class."*

The CPG does not refute here the postulates of the World Anti-Imperialist Platform, but its own.

### **No support for capitalists?**

The quote reads "capitalist Russia", which begs the question: Is there any doubt that Russia is not capitalist? Why is it not also mentioned that the USA, NATO and the EU are capitalist? Why is it considered necessary to underline the fact that Russia is capitalist, but not that the USA, NATO and the European Union are too?

We believe there are two (perhaps even three) answers to the above questions:

One: The CPG apparently assumes that a communist organisation that "dares" to support Russia cannot have learned that with the final dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual

Assistance on 1 July 1991, a part of the entire socialist camp ceased to exist and that the Russian Federation that emerged from that dissolution is no longer socialist.

Two: The CPG must underline this character of Russia in order to point out that the communists cannot even think of supporting it. In other words, the CPG believes that communists "must not" support a country in which the capitalist mode of production predominates. The statement "capitalist Russia" or others like "capitalist Iran" are thus warning signs for "real" communists: "It is capitalist, don't even think of supporting such a country". No matter how anti-fascist, anti-imperialist or popular-democratic a country's politics may be, the political purism proposed by the CPG demands that only a purely and truly socialist country deserves the support of "real" communists.

(Three: The CPG only considers Russia as a capitalist country, but not the US, NATO and the EU. What they would be, is not clarified.)

In our opinion, it is the first two reasons that lead the CPG to explicitly label Russia as capitalist.

We, the CP(PA), members of the World Anti-imperialist Platform, consider it not only legitimate, as Lenin<sup>39)</sup> and Stalin and in general the entire leadership of the USSR did throughout its life, for communists to support countries where the capitalist mode of production predominates, but also a real necessity for the anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and socialist struggle as long as this country plays a positive role in this respect. Although Russia is today a capitalist country, we express our full support for its current anti-imperialist and anti-fascist struggle in Ukraine and wish it victory!

We will elaborate on this point later in part two of this paper, when we address the key issues.

### **Reactionary Venezuela?**

One part of the above quote deserves more attention, and that is that the Platform meeting in Caracas "The

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39) Little is known that on 27 March 1919, the Soviet government became the first government in the world to recognise the independence and sovereignty of Afghanistan, which at that time was a monarchy, and supported it during the Third Anglo-Afghan War (3 May-3 June 1919). At the end of this war, Britain was forced to sign a peace treaty with Afghanistan, recognising the country's independence for the first time. The CPG of today would have been outraged in those years: "How could Comrade Lenin think of recognising and even supporting 'monarchist Afghanistan!'" and would surely have given him "lessons" in political purism very similar to those given to us.



WAP's event in Venezuela coincided with the anti-popular attack launched by the social democratic government of PSUV on the working class and popular strata of Venezuela". If one reads the CPG's statements on Venezuela, they are practically based on a single source: the PCV, whose rank and file have entered into strong contradiction with the leadership of their party.

The Venezuelan process is not a revolutionary or socialist process in the communist sense, i.e. one that postulates the entrenchment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the establishment of a socialist system of material and cultural production. But it is an anti-imperialist government that is in direct confrontation with the USA and the EU, a government that has taken great steps towards the national sovereignty of Venezuela, that is strengthening the economic and political integration of the region, whose existence has meant strong economic support for Cuba, and that is a fundamental part of the international forces that are weakening the hegemony of the USA and the EU. Which of these aspects can the CPG boast of today? Which of these aspects would be reprehensible from the point of view of socialist construction?

It is false that the legitimate government of Venezuela has launched an anti-popular attack "on the working class and popular strata of Venezuela". Those who launched such an attack were the imperialists who stole (and continue to steal) millions of dollars and gold from the Venezuelan homeland, who caused the death of thousands of Venezuelans with the sanctions, who destroyed the productive capacity of the country with the economic blockade, who financed, equipped and politically supported the Venezuelan reaction<sup>40)</sup> and who tried to overthrow the legitimate government of

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40) In this context, the following documents can be consulted (Spanish texts):

"Informe del Experto Independiente sobre la promoción de un orden internacional democrático y equitativo acerca de su misión a la República Bolivariana de Venezuela y al Ecuador" in: [https://digitalibrary.un.org/nanna/record/1640958/files/A\\_HRC\\_39\\_47\\_Add-1-ES.pdf?withWatermark=0&withMetadata=0&version=1&registerDownload=1](https://digitalibrary.un.org/nanna/record/1640958/files/A_HRC_39_47_Add-1-ES.pdf?withWatermark=0&withMetadata=0&version=1&registerDownload=1)

"La Relatora Especial de la ONU sobre el impacto negativo de las medidas coercitivas unilaterales en el disfrute de los derechos humanos, Sra. Alena Douhan, concluye su visita a la República Bolivariana de Venezuela" in: <https://observatorio.gob.ve/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Informe-de-Relatora-Especial-de-la-ONU-Alena-Douhan-1.pdf>

"Sanciones económicas como castigo colectivo: El caso de Venezuela" in: <https://cepr.net/images/stories/reports/venezuela-sanctions-2019-05-spn.pdf>

Venezuela, with American money and the American flag in their hands! Is the CPG content to condemn the repeated coup attempts planned by imperialism to overthrow President Nicolás Maduro and to proclaim abstract solidarity with the Venezuelan people, but not to support the government that actively defends the state, the Bolivarian process and the Venezuelan homeland against such criminal acts? No CPG statement expresses support for the Venezuelan government for its actions against the coup attempts. To proclaim solidarity with "the people" and to take it away from the government that has just been elected by the people and against which the coup attempts are directed is nonsense.

The people is not an abstract concept, as the CPG claims. The people are made up of social classes, and part of the people support the coup attempts and the US intervention in Venezuela. Which part of the "people" does the CPG support, those who participated in the coup attempts or those who defend the government of Nicolás Maduro?

With the term "anti-popular attack", the CPG unhappily refers to the police response to the non-peaceful demonstrations of the Venezuelan philo-fascist coup groups.

We, as Chilean communists, who know well the infamous procedures of reaction and the consequences of a hand too soft to resist it, consider the measures implemented by the government of President Nicolás Maduro to be legitimate and necessary. One could even say that they are too soft. More dictatorship could be good for the process, in our opinion. However, it is not our duty to criticise the possible shortcomings of the Bolivarian process. But it is the duty of all revolutionary organisations, especially communist ones, to build democratic, popular and sovereign processes that are friends of Bolivarian Venezuela in our countries, that strengthen the Bolivarian process through political and economic relations between the countries.

The CPG then indignantly points out that the Venezuelan government has reached agreements with the right-wing opposition and the USA.

Unlike the CPG, we think that the fact that the Venezuelan government has reached agreements with

over the world happy, as it is a declaration of defeat— at least on the part of the opposition - and at the same time a strengthening of the Bolivarian government. Or



should the Venezuelan government avoid finding ways to reduce the subversive actions of the national reaction and keep alive the social instability that so much impedes the progress of the country and the progress of the Bolivarian process?

In the relationship with the USA, the agreements are not political, but economic. Should Venezuela reject the agreements on trade and oil production even if the USA is willing to lift at least part of its sanctions against the country? Should Venezuela carry out an economic “self-blockade” and strangle its own economy in the name of political purism? Communists should rejoice that the US has been forced to withdraw part of its sanctions policy, at least temporarily. This has given a huge boost to the Venezuelan economy. The economic resources now flowing into the country are allowing for advances in healthcare, housing, the development of domestic industry to lay the foundations for a process of industrialisation of the country, and even the strengthening of the military. Not welcoming Venezuela’s economic recovery, which is also a consequence of the less radical sanctions, would in practice be to wish for the economic and therefore political collapse of the Bolivarian process, in line with the US and the EU.

The Bolivarian process may or may not have shortcomings. Regardless of this, a communist must always prefer the Bolivarian process, with all its notable advantages and also disadvantages, to the direct rule of imperialism in Venezuela. As long as we communists do not succeed in building at least a political process similar to that of Venezuela in our countries, it is incumbent upon us to pay the utmost respect and admiration to the Bolivarian process. We therefore take this opportunity to reiterate our firm support for the government of Nicolás Maduro, to state that we are following the economic recovery of the country with great optimism, and to wish his government and the militant Bolivarian people of Venezuela every success in all their future endeavours. We are confident that they will succeed in overcoming all the obstacles imposed by imperialism and national reaction, and we pledge to accompany their struggle and, above all, to fight for a homeland in Chile that is a friend of Bolivarian Venezuela!

**The member organisations of the Platform “ignore or deny” that the current mode of production in the world is capitalist ...**

This at least is how the CPG puts it in its critique of the Platform in the section entitled “Imperialism as an ‘abnormal situation’ that can be remedied ...”:

*“The WAP presents a completely reversed picture of the global reality we are experiencing. From its analyses, we cannot understand that we live in the capitalist system, since the concept of capitalism has been banished from every related statement (e.g. the founding Paris Declaration, the materials of the recent Caracas meeting).”*

The CPG strangely believes that the members of the World Anti-Imperialist Platform would not know that the internationally dominant mode of production is capitalist, since the word capitalism would not appear in the declarations (they use the term “banished”), except, according to them, in the Greek translation.

The lack of reading ability of the editors of the “Critique of the Platform” is truly astonishing. Anyone with an average human capacity for reading comprehension easily discovers in our statements such expressions as: “That while today’s Russia is a capitalist country, it is one whose socialist past has left it with an ability to stand up for itself against imperialist control” or “This line is based on a wrong theoretical premise (that every large economy in the capitalist world must automatically be an imperialist one”.

The text goes on to point out that there was a “misuse of the term imperialism” on our part:

*“At the same time, there is a misuse of the words “imperialism”, “imperialists” and “anti-imperialism” in the WAP materials. Thus, imperialism, which according to Lenin is monopoly capitalism, is distortedly treated simply as an aggressive foreign policy, detached from its economic basis (the monopolies and the capitalist market economy) and from its class essence as the power of the bourgeoisie.”*

They believe, as we have already learned above, that we—and we mean here the members of the Platform—would understand imperialism “simply as an aggressive foreign policy, detached from its economic basis”.

It sounds like humour. Where did the CPG get such childish ideas?

It would not be worthwhile to respond to such

arguments. However, since the CPG presents them as fundamental arguments in its “critique”, which is available to everyone, we feel obliged to refute them. First of all, it must be stressed that all the members of the Platform, as well as our party, aspire to the overcoming of wage slavery, i.e. the capitalist system of exploitation, and that we all, without exception, are “clear enough” to agree with the CPG that the prevailing mode of production today is the capitalist one. We differ from him, however, in that this is for us a self-evident fact that does not deserve to be mentioned in every sentence of our writings. When we speak of imperialism, we speak of the highest stage of capitalism, as comrade Lenin had categorised it and as one of his most famous works is entitled: “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism”. One might think that the authors of the “critique” of the Platform understand Lenin’s categorisation and the title of the work, to which they themselves refer. Evidently, they do not! And since the CPG does not seem to understand Lenin’s elementary categorisation of the present stage of development of capitalism, it is unable to understand that to speak of imperialism is also to speak of capitalism. It seems almost incredible to have to reply to a party which claims to be communist and to know scientific socialism that it is superfluous to speak of imperialism and capitalism at the same time, because imperialism is capitalism, capitalism in its highest stage.

The CPG jumps from one far-fetched interpretation of the concepts postulated by the Platform to the next. Now it turns out that the Platform would imagine an imperialism embodied exclusively by a single country, the USA:

*“In all its statements, the identification of the concept of imperialism with the strongest power of the international imperialist system to date, i.e. the USA, is characteristic. Even when reference is made to other imperialist unions, such as the EU, NATO, the IMF, the World Bank, etc., it is assumed that we are dealing with “US imperial interests”. In this way, as if by magic, the responsibilities and self interests of the bourgeois classes of the rest capitalist states, other than the USA, that participate in these alliances are concealed. Thus, the USA is distortedly presented as an empire of a modern colonial system, where all the states allied to it are its subordinates.”*

It is true that we recognise the United States of America

as the centre of imperialism, the hegemonic country par excellence. One need only look at the map showing the distribution of US military bases around the world (more than 800 officially recognised military bases) to confirm this fact. No country in the world comes even close to this number. However, the CPG takes it to the absurd extreme that, in our opinion, the US is the only imperialist country in the world. The picture painted by the CPG of an “empire of a modern colonial system in which all states allied with it are its subordinates” is simplistic. The Caracas Declaration of the Platform points this out:

*“It is clear for all to see that the global market economy is in deep crisis. This crisis of global capitalism is accelerating the decline of the USA, which rose to the top of the imperialist world after the powers of old Europe had been weakened by two world wars, claiming for itself the title of ‘saviour of the modern [capitalist] world.’”<sup>41)</sup>*

Imperialism has its centre in the United States of America (given the constant process of concentration of political power in the hands of this country, especially as a result of the fact that it was the great victor of the Second World War, even if it was not the country that expended the most sacrifice and energy). But we also count among the imperialist countries the following:

- *the United Kingdom with its imperialist union, the Commonwealth of Nations, comprising 56 member states, the vast majority of which belonged to the former territories of the old British Empire*
- *France and its hegemony over the continent of Africa*
- *Germany and its domination of the Eurozone*
- *and finally Japan*

In these states with the USA as the political and economic epicentre of imperialism, we recognise the imperialist countries of the present. The domination and exploitation that these countries exercise over others constitutes imperialism as a system of international exploitation.

Now, it is true that the latter countries (Britain, France,

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41) World Anti-Imperialist Platform (WAP), “Caracas declaration: Latin America has a vital role to play in the world anti-imperialist struggle”, <https://wap21.org/?p=2332>

Germany and Japan) are economically, politically and militarily dependent on the USA. In fact, Germany and Japan in particular have ceded part of their sovereignty to the USA as lackeys so that the USA can impose and defend its imperialist interests in the world. This is a consequence of the defeat of the Axis powers during the Second World War. To this day, the US maintains military bases in these countries with which it can conduct its foreign (and increasingly its domestic) policy. Acknowledging this fact does not at all mean, as the CPG implies, that the Platform parties would exempt these countries (because of their dependence on US imperialism) from the “responsibility and interests of the bourgeoisie of the other capitalist states”. How the CPG arrives at such a conclusion is a real mystery.

Perhaps the answer lies in what follows:

*“On the contrary, it is considered that “Russia and China are not aggressive imperialist powers” and together with others, such as North Korea and Iran, are presented as “anti-imperialist”, which, together with the so-called progressive governments of Latin America, resist imperialism.*

*Moreover, we see that any class-based approach is abandoned as various regional unions, “such as ALBA and CELAC”, which basically involve capitalist states but the WAP believes that will “bring together the oppressed nations of Latin America”, are praised.*

*Finally, with regard to the imperialist war in Ukraine, the WAP considers it to be an act of aggression by the USA, which is using Ukraine to attack ... “anti-imperialist” Russia and China.”*

The CPG’s indignation at our alleged exculpation of the “responsibility and self-interest of the bourgeoisie of the other capitalist states” is based on the fact that it includes the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran and even the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in the list of imperialist countries. The CPG’s indignation is compounded by the Platform’s support for regionalist agreements such as ALBA and CELAC, “which basically involve capitalist”. Since such organisations “basically” involve capitalist states, we communists would be obliged, according to the same logic that the CPG applies in the case of Russia or Iran, to reject them out of hand, as if every capitalist state or organisation were as bad as any other ... as if

there were not only contradictions or at least nuances within countries but also within international politics and economics.

As CP(PA), not only do we not consider any of these countries and organisations (ALBA and CELAC) imperialist, although they are capitalist, but two of the countries mentioned, China and the DPRK, are socialist and belong to the current socialist camp together with Cuba, Vietnam and Laos (to which democratic and sovereign processes such as Nicaragua and Venezuela are added).

The method of analysis used by the CPG absolutely contradicts the communist method of analysis: materialist dialectics, which interprets reality as a whole, i.e. material and social reality, as contradictory in itself. The CPG is incapable of even beginning to recognise the contradictions that exist within international politics between the capitalist countries and the international organisations, let alone exploit them in the interests of the working class and its allies.

For him it all boils down to a very simple universal equation: it is a capitalist = it is evil!

Even Albert Einstein would be jealous of this equation.

Thus for the CPG, incapable of finding the slightest nuances, it is true according to its schematic universal equation that IMF and WB = ALBA and CELAC.

Or for example: USA = Venezuela.

Or, also: USA-EU-NATO=Russia.

And, problem solved.

It goes without saying that the method of analysis applied by the CPG is not materialistic dialectics, but static and idealistic.

Here we have finally entered a major ideological point.

The second part will continue with a critique of the CPG’s idea of imperialism in the form of a pyramid and the false conclusions that follow from that idea.

## **10 commandments of the most volatile opportunism and revisionism**

**Patelis Dimitrios** | Collective of Struggle for the

## Revolutionary Unification of Humanity, Greece

The parasitic character of imperialism is linked to the systemic corruption, to the degeneration of the revolutionary movement by capital. Using institutional and extra-institutional forms, the revolutionary movement is integrated into the national and transnational monopoly regime. Out of this stem the historical forms and contemporary manifestations of opportunism

As V.I. Lenin taught us, opportunism is a basic form of undermining and dismantling the movement, which is constituted by the de facto propagation of the interests of capital, of the financial oligarchy, within the workers' movement. This is happening primarily in the imperialist countries of the front line, but also in their vassal countries, those with an average and/or lower level of development.

The opportunists, in order to veil and ideologically mask their integration into the capitalist regime, their practical and organisational drift into disruptive positions of subordination of the movement to the interests and strategic choices of the financial oligarchy, make successive revisions of Marxism-Leninism, sometimes with revolutionary-like and even “left-wing” rhetoric and terminology. These revisions are necessary for the corrosive manipulation they practice, serving as a theory-resembling cover for their descent into bottomless right-wing, pro-regime opportunism.

The deeper the opportunists' pro regime's downward spiral, the more out of touch with reality, unbalanced, unscientific, and irrational are the ideological constructs they concoct and invoke.

The most dangerous “modern” unprecedented revision of the Leninist political economy of imperialism of our times is systematically launched by the ideological apparatus of the present leadership of the KKE, through the crude irrational ideological construct/dogma, the infamous “imperialist pyramid” nonsense, which they have the impudence to try to impose through every legitimate and illegitimate way on the international communist movement.

This ideological construct, in all its absurdity, constitutes a “coherent” scheme for deceiving and manipulating people lacking a Marxist-Leninist dialectical education. Any “coherence” of this highly metaphysical hodgepodge has nothing to do with its

internal composition (factual, theoretical, logical and methodological). On the contrary, it is highly external and deeply linked to the extremely valuable concrete service it provides to the bourgeoisie as a systemic/regime project of deception, manipulation, misdirection, division, undermining and dismantling of the movement.

What do the modern “communists” who have contractually undertaken the destruction of the anti-imperialist and communist movement acknowledge and reject, what do they embrace and what do they resign from?

Here we will provide a brief outline of some of the basic unacceptable theses of this vulgar toxic revision attempted by the most dangerous opportunists during the escalation of World War III.

1. Within the foundation of the infamous “imperialist pyramid” nonsense, lies an unprecedented deception: the deliberate confounding of the scientific categories “imperialist stage” and “imperialist state”. Thus, not only any possibility of reference to the historical stages are relinquished, but also any scientific approach towards imperialism and each stage of the structure and history of the development of society.

*In this way, imperialism cannot be the “highest stage of capitalism” since:*

*a. “there are no stages” and*

*b. “anyone who dares to speak of stages is an opportunist”! (We will come back to the matter of stages).*

It goes without saying that in order to support their nonsense, the pharaonic revisionists are forced to censor and ban the classics of our revolutionary theory. In order to disguise their opportunism, they are quick to declare—implicitly but clearly—that “the first opportunists are Marx, Engels and Lenin”, i.e., those who proposed and established the dialectic of the laws governing the stages of historical development!

What is therefore left for the revisionists to say about imperialism, if it is not a qualitatively and essentially historically specific stage? Imperialism becomes, in their pharaonic hodgepodge, an ahistorical condition, an abstract structure (in the spirit of the bourgeois structuralist Althusserian ideotypes), with the how and whence it emerged, as part of a law governed process,



remaining unclear and irrelevant (from which stage/stages) and even more unknown if, why and how it can be overcome historically by the next stage (stages of revolutionary transformations towards communism).

In their fixation, ALL states are equally abstract building blocks, structuralistically self-sufficient, self-contained and introverted “formations”, qualitatively and essentially undifferentiated and homogenized (any state where monopolies exist or operate in is automatically declared an “imperialist state”). Among these unequivocally “imperialist states” there may even be some “inequality”, i.e., ONLY QUANTITATIVE differences, inequality in terms of order of magnitude, (of metaphysically understood measure). Thus, they may statically occupy some place in the pyramid (any scientific examination of inter-state relations, imperialist integrations, global relations and processes of production, capital flows and monopoly super-profits, etc. is rejected here by default). Thus, all states are automatically labelled “imperialist”!

To the extent that the architects giving shape to this nonsense sense that their pharaonic edifice is unstable, they are quick to “alter” it with 2 flimsy admissions:

*1) of all these “imperialisms”, those who—unknown how—were once near the top, are starting to compete for a position at the top of the pyramid and*

*2) in all these “imperialisms” small or larger, we need not search in vain for scientific substantiation of their imperialist nature ... For the unabashed and despicable revisionists, as an overwhelming confirmation of their “collective pharaonic wisdom” serves this killer “argument”: “the capitalists of every country at the stage of imperialism, are engaged in or wish to engage in imperialist policy”!!!*

And here, science has reached its apogee ...

There could not be a more blatant confession of mindless subjective idealism that wants to advertise itself as a “revolutionary class consistency” ... By this logic, every small shopkeeper, every petit bourgeois individual can self-evidently be considered a capitalist, an imperialist, a great tycoon of the financial oligarchy, but only if he wants to be, because “he would like it that way”! The same goes for the wage-earning proletariat!

Imperialism is finally reduced to the “wants” of some subjects, while metaphysical voluntarism does away

with every trace of Marxist science and rationality! ...

2. They reject the Leninist discovery of the essential and decisive for the monopoly stage, manifestation of the basic contradiction of capital: the contradiction between capital and labour, between dead labour of the past and living labour of the present (Marx). That is to say, they reject the contradiction between imperialist countries (a handful of parasites/rentiers according to Lenin) and independent, semi-independent, dependent countries, through multiple mechanisms of extracting surplus value on a regional and global scale, through the siphoning of monopoly super-profits. Without this contradiction, which is fundamental to imperialist exploitation, it is impossible to diagnose the current times and conjuncture, it is impossible to formulate a historically specific strategy and tactics that will lead to victory. It is an unprecedented apologetic, which absolves the domination of the world financial oligarchy and disarms the revolutionary movement.

3. They reject a Leninist category of irreplaceable theoretical and practical importance, the “weak link”: the country and/or group of countries, of the periphery, where the internal and global contradictions of the imperialist system are concentrated, forming an explosive node that makes the outbreak of revolutionary situations possible and necessary. Without the precise identification of the organic dialectical relationship between the “weak link”, a revolutionary situation and the escalation of the latter into a victorious revolution, there can be no conscious intervention of the revolutionary subject there where beats the heart of the global revolutionary process: especially in countries with an average or even below-average level of development (but not totally impoverished, as the very existence of the collective subject is practically nullified in these countries, as is also the case in the countries of the imperialist frontline).

4. They de facto reject communist strategy, they practically renounce it through the metaphysical detachment of strategy from tactics and the reduction of the latter to an abstract “anti-capitalism”. They go so far as to reject and even ban the word “tactics” from their official texts and rhetoric, while they strive to convince the world that this word alone denotes “opportunism”!



An elementary knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory makes it clear that the categories 'strategy' and 'tactics' constitute a dialectical dipole. Detachment of one pole from the other, from its opposite, every metaphysical absolutisation of one of them, leads practically to the opposite of the absolutised pole: the abstract absolutisation of the strategic end, its detachment from the means, the ways and the actual gradual escalation of the concrete historical process, from the development of the totality of the objective and subjective conditions of its achievement, leads to the confinement of the movement to blind and meaningless activism, to tailing the capitalist class, hounding behind the agenda set by its regime, that is, to a crawling tacticism.

We have seen it in previous forms of apostasy, e.g. in the Kautskyism of the Second International: in the name of the "orthodoxy" of adherence to "pure strategy", to "pure socialism", the then opportunist apostates denounced the Bolsheviks and the October Revolution as a "dirty Asian sect" against their own "pure strategic orthodoxy"! They thundered and excoriated the "heretical" Bolsheviks and Lenin precisely because they rejected the Leninist contribution to the political economy of imperialism, the theoretical and practical importance of the "weak link", the Leninist conception of the national question and the need for an organic link between anti-imperialism and the socialist revolution, the need for an anti-colonial struggle and the revolutionary removal of pre-capitalist residues, etc. Thus, expecting the automatic and spontaneous "maturation of conditions" in the developed capitalist-imperialist countries, those ten a penny "revolutionaries", also openly moved to positions of integration and capitalist reform, to becoming advocates of their own imperialist coalition during the war ...

Today's opportunist apostates are resurrecting and continuing in an even more crude and vulgar way the most rotten of traditions that led to the bankruptcy of the Second International which Lenin mercilessly criticised. Additionally, traditions of the Trotskyist sects, neo-Marxist, Eurocommunist, structuralist, post-structuralist and post-modernist sects, with clumsy new gimmicks. They even have the audacity to disguise this apostacy/resignation with the grandstanding of their alleged commitment to the "revolutionary strategy" which they reduce to "pure anti-capitalism" = "pure people's power-socialism" ...

5. They metaphysically detach theory from praxis while reducing scientific theory to propagandistic ideological constructs to cover up their opportunist pro-regime drift. "Theory" and "praxis" also constitute a dialectical dipole, the metaphysical treatment of which leads to blindness, to the nullification and undermining of the revolutionary movement. In this way they de facto reject and disavow both revolutionary theory and revolutionary praxis, since, as Lenin proved, "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement [...] the role of the pioneer militant can only be fulfilled by a party guided by a pioneering theory" ( V. I. Lenin: "What is to be done?")

6. The dialectic of the historical process consists of the development in law governed stages, with a specific historical escalation of qualitative, quantitative and essential transformations, objective and subjective conditions, with a corresponding upgrade of means, ends, modes and subjects. Only on the basis of this scientific approach is the law governed character of the revolution substantiated. Without it, revolution and socialism-communism are empty words, meaningless chatter. However, our revisionists also reject the revolutionary theory of historical law governed process discovered by the classics of Marxism-Leninism. They have gone so far as to deny the very existence of law governed stages of historical development, which is a gross rejection of the dialectic of revolutionary development.

They justify this obscurantist irrational revision by invoking an imaginary "theory of stages" which is supposedly a property of ... opportunism! By denying the existence of a gradual, law governed development in society, they deny the very possibility of scientific research, scientific description and explanation of the structure and history of the development of society, and thus reject any possibility of scientific prediction, on the basis of which alone is the formulation of a victorious strategy and tactics of the revolutionary movement possible.

Shadowboxing with some arbitrary ideological construction, referred to in neo-Marxism as the "theory of stages", they have moved to overtly counter-revolutionary positions: metaphysical evolutionism, i.e. the de facto view of capitalism as an eternal and

insurmountable system ...

7. They reject the necessity and the very possibility of any real socialist revolution, any historical project of early socialist revolutions. According to their dogma, “all countries are imperialist within the pyramid”, therefore there are no “weak links”, tactical transitional goals, and escalation of the struggle, from the revolutionary situation, the uprising with frontal anti-imperialist (national liberation, anti-neocolonial, democratic, etc.) movements in dependent countries with an average and below-average level of development, to the socialist revolution. Therefore, they also reject the tasks of escalating the struggle towards the transitional stage, towards the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist construction.

8. The opportunists reject the concrete historical process of revolutionary transformations in the existing victorious early socialist revolutions of various peoples, addressing them in a “didactic contemptuous tone”, bordering on racist colonialist conceit. So they preach in an arrogant tone: “What you have isn’t socialism” and “We will tell you how you should have carried out your revolution” or “How you should do it”!

However, exactly what kind of revolution can be taught by the apostates who, as we have seen above, have rejected and renounced every fundamental concept and principle of revolutionary theory and practice? Their “preaching” is done by invoking a metaphysically idealized “model of pure socialism”, without contradictions, problems and conflicts with the counter-revolution, a model in absolute metaphysical opposition to capitalism, in the spirit of abstract “anti-capitalism”, the imaginary absolute negation of capitalism in the metaphysical beyond of the “maturation of conditions”, which practically means being trapped in the insurmountability of capitalism ...

9. They categorically reject the essential and decisive component of the world revolutionary movement since the 20th century: the camp of the countries of the early socialist revolutions. The current opportunism/revisionism, takes and projects the prevalence of bourgeois revolutions and the restoration of capitalist relations in the USSR and the early socialist countries that emerged after WWII (with the decisive presence

of the Red Army in Eastern Europe) AS WELL AS THE BOURGEOIS-REACTIONARY PROPAGANDA: A supposedly FINAL AND INDEFINITE “FAILURE-DEFEAT” of the very idea and prospect of socialism!

This attitude tends to be applied retroactively in history: even the socialist character of the USSR, and even the role of Stalin himself, begins to be explicitly and unequivocally called into question! The Second World War is gradually described as “imperialist from the start and to the end”, etc. Apparently, it is only a matter of time (and a gradual demographic-age change in the composition of members, cadres and followers who have a lived experience of the revolutionary history of the movement) for the drift into regime positions of overt anti-Sovietism/anti-communism. This position leads to a potential rejection of all existing socialism, even in the countries that continue to build socialism (PRC, DPRK, Vietnam, Laos, Cuba, etc.), based on bourgeois ahistorical ideologies, which identify commodity-monetary relations with capitalism, thus failing to recognize the legitimate necessity of the existence and development of various forms of historically necessary socialist commodity and monetary relations enlisted by various forms and levels of central planning, which CANNOT be abolished IMMEDIATELY, but are sublated at the stage of maturity of socialism, towards the achievement of a mature communist society.

10. They reject another essential and decisive component of the global revolutionary movement: anti-imperialism and the countries that emerged as a result of victorious national liberation, anti-colonialist, etc. movements, under the influence and with the internationalist help of the victorious early socialist revolutions of the 20th century. The opportunists label the whole of the anti-imperialist, national liberation, anti-colonialist, etc. movements, every frontal struggle “opportunist”, “reformist”, “imperialist”, operating “under foreign flags”, etc.

The entirety of the unacceptable positions and doctrines of this historically unprecedented for the audacity and primitive irrationality of the opportunist-revisionist web cannot stand up to elementary scientific Marxist criticism. It is no coincidence that in order to circulate, submit and finally impose its despicable ideological constructs on the people it controls, the current leadership of the KKE resorts to torrential

propaganda through repetition (which ends up as brainwashing), to the effective prohibition of any critical thinking, any differentiation from its doctrines (in terms of taboos), without hesitating to resort to the practices of the deep state, such as mass ideological lynching and the smearing of dissidents.

Does their provocative arrogance and their prevarication function as a desperate attempt to overcompensate for their bottomless theoretical and practical degeneration, or is it a necessary element of extreme zeal in their mission to undermine and dismantle the revolutionary movement? It remains unknown ... The only certainty is that this increasingly insolent conceit of their offenses, provokes the indignation of the communists of various countries, those who refuse to comply with their suggestions and accept their “gifts”.

However, it is appropriate to ground our questioning in the field of practical testing, complementary to the strict scientific Marxist critique.

Let us therefore pose the following question: What exactly is the practical perspective that any adoption of this package of crude revisions holds for the revolutionary movement?

Under this pharaonic and disastrous “theory”, communists are required to find their place and role within a bleak system:

All 237 countries on the planet (all states and microstates) are universally imperialist, qualitatively and essentially undifferentiated, homogeneous and embedded as static and self-contained building blocks in the “imperialist pyramid”.

All that the working class and its parties could do is “pure class struggle”, “class war” for “people’s power”.

The latter is conceived as “socialism” without intermediate transitional stages towards and within it, as “pure anti-capitalism without a trace of commodity and money relations (CMR)” (in this bourgeois ideological construct CMR is synonymous with capitalism) = directly to “communism”.

When will this happen? “When conditions are mature!”

When, where, how and why are these conditions likely to mature somewhere? For the reasons stated above, this scheme does not foresee the slightest possibility of scientific prediction on the basis of Marxist science, which they have collectively revised and abandoned. The whole process is mystified to a degree corresponding to

the expectation of believers of “the fullness of time”, the “second coming of God”, etc.

Will conditions mature simultaneously in the entire pharaonic structure or first somewhere, in some structural element of this pyramid? It is unknown and impossible to give a rational answer based on the figure, since there is no room in it for gradual qualitative and substantial differentiation of the thickened structural elements.

Let us try to examine the two basic versions on the basis of the infamous figure:

a. Let us examine the possibility of a simultaneous spontaneous and automatic maturation of conditions in all 237 countries (for reasons unknown). How would the balance of power change all at once, so that the next day the communists (without allies, fronts, escalation and coordination of the struggle on a global basis, etc.) would perform the miracle? What socio-political subject is preparing on a global scale for this miracle? Which global financial oligarchy will allow this to happen? The questions are of course rhetorical in nature ... Practically: never! It is absolutely unfeasible to simultaneously change the balance of power (due to inequality, parasitism of the imperialist states, etc.), just as it is unfeasible to simultaneously prepare an equally organised, militant and effective revolutionary socio-political subject in every part of the planet. Moreover, the preparation of such a subject is unattainable without the leading role of the communists. How will the communists be able to perform this role if—saturated by the toxic solvent of the “pyramid”—they are condemned to being self-referential and self-absorbed, isolationist, harmless to the regime of the world financial oligarchy?

b. In violation of all the tenets of the Pharaonic pyramid, let us suppose that conditions mature (unknown how) in 1 country, or group of countries. Does the global financial oligarchy, together with the oligarchies of all (236 now?) countries, have any reason to allow this to happen without suppressing at birth any movement to challenge its sovereignty? What then can the poor revolutionary movement of a single country do, even if it has the majority of the working class and people on its side? Alliances on a frontal basis for tactical purposes, at home and abroad, are “forbidden” (since tactics, alliances, fronts, anti-imperialism, stages, etc. = opportunism, etc.).

Any intermediate hypothetical version of the above would have unambiguously similar results. This plan goes beyond the most morbid insanity.

In practice, therefore, the revolutionary movement in these twisted terms can never do anything revolutionary, at any time or any place!

So, what does this “programme” propose? Practically nothing communist: it proposes the practical DEATH OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT AND EVERY PROGRESSIVE PARTY ON THE PLANET! Simply, until the spontaneous and automatic “maturation of conditions”, i.e. eternally, people ought to support electorally etc. and reproduce the remaining organizational and institutional formation as a diminishing framework of existential reference ...

By this one-sided conclusion alone it becomes clear that the luminaries of this party ideological apparatus, de facto (regardless of their intentions) give no damn about the real movement, about the revolution and socialism-communism. All they could care about is the maintenance and reproduction of the conditions of parasitism of their small bureaucratic machine, their entrenched positions and roles as an organic component of the 5 decades of peaceful adaptation to the bourgeois parliamentary system of the national and transnational superstructure (EU, NATO, etc.).

The stewardship over the glorious revolutionary history of a once revolutionary party and movement must be conducted in terms of ritualistic references to symbols, which to the extent that the degeneration of the apparatus and its integration into the regime are promoted—are increasingly transformed into formalistic signifiers of the identity of a manipulable public, of a special reference “target group” in the spectrum of political marketing of the regime.

Political parties, like any element of culture, are not immutable throughout history. The gradual pro-regime degeneration of once revolutionary parties is a law of history that the classics, and Lenin in particular, pointed out during their time.

These de facto residual functions of the bureaucratic ideological apparatus of a rapidly degenerating party can be organically combined with an ideological-political manipulation of international aspirations, especially in view of the escalating World War III.

The revolutionary movement of our time is being called upon to respond to the challenges of World War

III. In war and in revolution—which war brings urgently back on the agenda—the main enemy of the movement is the imperialist axis under the US aggressor. An axis that instrumentalises and uses as its strike force its subordinate fascist and Nazi regimes of various hues.

In order for the revolutionary anti-imperialist movement to emerge victorious in this life-or-death confrontation with a still powerful enemy (despite the rapid loss of its forces, positions and roles in the global balance of power), it must achieve the maximum consolidation, unification and coordination of its forces, its formation into a strong and effective front at the national and international level.

This is impossible as long as most dangerous dipole in history, opportunism-revisionism, continues to undermine and divide the movement, sowing division and defeatism, disorienting and distracting forces. As long as it contributes actively and from within to the manipulative work of the mechanisms of the superstructure of the deep bourgeois state, in de facto (consciously and/or unconsciously) complicity with the tentacles of the non-state and transnational organs of imperialism. All as it contributes destructively to the undermining and annulment of the formation of the revolutionary subject of the time, through the buying-off, deception, the denigration of militants and parties/organisations, splits (with the principle of “divide and rule”), with deadly machinations and consequences for the movement.

What is required, therefore, is an unrelenting struggle for the revelation of its true role, for the unmasking, for the theoretical, ideological, moral-political and organisational crushing of this toxic and disruptive apostasy.

This struggle is indispensable for the realisation of the development of the world anti-imperialist front, with the catalytic role of a theoretically and practically reorganised and united world communist movement.